

Wednesday December 6 1995

Algeria D 8.50	Angola L 2.00	Argentina A 2.00	Australia A 2.00	Austria A 2.00	Belgium B 2.00	Canada C 2.00	Chad D 2.00	Czech Republic K 2.00	Denmark D 2.00	Egypt E 2.00	France F 2.00	Germany G 2.00	Greece G 2.00	Hong Kong H 2.00	India I 2.00	Indonesia I 2.00	Israel I 2.00	Italy I 2.00	Japan J 2.00	Korea K 2.00	Lebanon L 2.00	Lithuania L 2.00	Malaysia M 2.00	Malta M 2.00	Mexico M 2.00	Morocco M 2.00	Netherlands N 2.00	Norway N 2.00	Oman O 2.00	Pakistan P 2.00	Poland P 2.00	Portugal P 2.00	Romania R 2.00	Russia R 2.00	Spain S 2.00	Sweden S 2.00	Switzerland S 2.00	Taiwan T 2.00	Thailand T 2.00	Turkey T 2.00	USA U 2.00	Yemen Y 2.00
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The Guardian

INTERNATIONAL
NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

The last age of man: retirement
Nick Hornby and Blake Morrison
Guardian 2 with European weather

Society
England's green and noisy land
G2 page 10

Michael Billington on the race for the National
Who wants theatre's biggest job?
G2 page 8

Choice is between reform or decline, government declares as 500,000 march against welfare cuts

France in turmoil

Juppé defies tide of unrest
Paul Webster in Paris

THE FRENCH prime minister, Alain Juppé, yesterday defied some of the biggest anti-government demonstrations for nearly 30 years and refused to modify his plans to cut welfare benefits.

"France is at the crossroads and can choose between reform and decline," he told the national assembly as half a million people marched in street demonstrations across the country.

During a rowdy televised assembly debate in which the opposition continually demanded his resignation, Mr Juppé said: "If we back down we will go against the interests of France and the French people. The reforms are fair, necessary and urgent."

With rail and bus transport paralysed, teachers and hospital staff voting to join the walkouts, and another peak day of protest coming tomorrow — when airline staff and airport ground crews are expected to join in — the protests seemed to be hardening.

But in an attempt to defuse the unrest, the prime minister told the social affairs minister, Jacques Barrot, to open talks with trade union leaders to negotiate the reforms' timetable and assure them that special public sector pension and other rights were not in immediate peril. He also denied plans to privatise the state-owned railways.

Although the government, which has a four-fifths majority in the national assembly, easily survived a no-confidence vote brought by the left-wing opposition, socialist leaders said Mr Juppé had said nothing in parliament which would dampen worker and student anger. The socialist



Agitators, who arrived at the end of an otherwise peaceful demonstration, overturn cars in the Place Pigalle, Paris

ist motion was defeated by 88 votes to 489.

The Socialist Party national assembly leader, Laurent Fabius, said people were fed up with the Gaullist-led regime after less than seven months in power. His attack reflected a new survey in the right-wing magazine, Valeurs Actuelles, which showed that two-thirds of voters opposed President Jacques Chirac's policies.

Anti-government marches called by the communist-led CGT and the moderate Force Ouvrière had earlier proved a spectacular success, as more public and private sector workers, including teachers, rallied to support a new day of strikes tomorrow.

Although union claims that the worker-student march in Paris attracted 160,000 people appeared exaggerated, police did not dispute estimates that many provincial protests were bigger than any demonstration since May 1968. More than 50,000 people gathered in Marseille, and record-breaking numbers were reported from Toulouse and Rouen.

In the north-western town of Nantes, riot police clashed with several hundred students after they wrecked a bus shelter at the end of a morning protest march by more than 16,000 people. The students threw petrol bombs and police fired teargas.

The four-hour Paris march broke up among flurries of snow and isolated scenes of violence, started by a crowd of 300 young people, just before the no-confidence debate in the assembly. The number of organisations involved, including workers from private chemical, engineering and banking firms, proved that a growing number of public and private sector industries are determined to force the government to renegotiate.

Marchers concentrated on demanding the sacking of Mr Juppé before reaching the SNCF state railways headquarters to underline the fact that paralysis on the national network is approaching its third week. There were also big contingents from the Paris tube and bus services

Flu cure gets closer as drug trials resume
Roger Cowe and Chris Mithill

A SURGE in the number of people suffering from flu has allowed the drug company Glaxo Wellcome to test a revolutionary drug which could make the sore throats, fevers and aching limbs associated with the illness a thing of the past.

The drug, known by the code GG-167, could be available in two years' time if trials which restarted in the past week are successful. Sir Richard Sykes, Glaxo's chief executive, has given it top priority and said: "We will spare no expense bringing that drug through the system."

Trials of the computer-designed compound stalled last year because the warm winter in the northern hemisphere resulted in too few flu patients to act as guinea pigs. If the drug is eventually given approval, early projections suggest that it could reach sales of more than £200 million in its first year.

In laboratory tests GG-167 works by blocking the action which allows the flu virus to spread around the body. It does not attempt to kill the virus, but aims to prevent it escaping from infected cells by inhibiting an enzyme called neuraminidase which releases the virus.

"It's as though the flu virus is stuck to the airways, like a child's ball stuck on velcro," Charles Penn, a researcher for the project explained. "Neuraminidase cuts that velcro allowing the virus to spread. The GG-167 molecule blocks the action. The theory is that the immune system will then clear it up before there is widespread infection."

Initial tests on a handful of volunteers to establish safety have shown encouraging results, said Mr Penn. Volunteers with flu who took GG-167 recovered faster than those given a placebo.

The compound was first discovered in the mid-1980s by an Australian scientist at Monash University and has been developed, with financial support from Glaxo, by the small Australian company Biota.

Glaxo has paid \$1.6 million to Biota, and will pay a further \$1.5 million if the product wins approval from the regulatory authorities.

If trials on 600 people in both northern and southern hemispheres go well, the final phase of clinical trials on a much larger group will proceed next winter. The second trials will determine whether nasal spray or inhalation is most effective, and will allow Glaxo to decide on dosage. Approval is expected in 1997.

GG-167 could face competition. A team based at the University of Alabama is also working on a neuraminidase inhibitor, although it is not at such an advanced stage as Glaxo's GG-167.

Flu kills between 3,000 and 4,000 people during a typical British winter, with those most at risk being old people and people with breathing problems or weak immune systems. While vaccination helps to limit the incidence, flu still hits as many as one in 10 of the population each year.

This year's surge in cases, reported by the Royal College of General Practitioners, has been subject to some regional variation with Yorkshire being particularly badly hit. The most recent national figures, for the week ending on November 26, showed 138 cases per 100,000 of the population — up from the previous week's figure of 88.

Rates of above 400 are generally regarded as an epidemic. In the 1968 epidemic cases were running at 800 per week per 100,000 of the population, and in 1989 cases peaked at 538.

Mr Penn said it was a challenge for doctors to know when patients genuinely had flu, and not a cold. Glaxo and its collaborators are working on diagnostic tests for flu to try to solve this problem.

Duchess 'relaxed' on jewel theft

£250,000 gems 'likely to be taken abroad and broken up'

Angella Johnson

THE Duchess of York was last night said to be taking a relaxed attitude towards the riddle of the stolen £250,000 wedding gift from her mother-in-law, despite fears that the diamond necklace and bracelet will be smuggled abroad and broken down for sale.

The necklace — 12 glittering diamond flower clusters linked by even more diamonds — and bracelet were part of a set given as a wedding present by the Queen in 1986 and bought from the royal jewellers, Garrards.

The jewels were taken from a suitcase travelling with the duchess's dresser, Jane Dunn-Bulter, on a British Airways Boeing 747 last Monday evening somewhere between New York and London.

Tania Hunter, co-owner of the Sloane Street jewellers, Coburn and Bellamy, said that the duchess's jewellery would probably be broken down and sold after being fenced. "If



The Duchess of York wearing the diamond necklace

they were stolen in Britain, they are probably out of the country by now," she added.

A spokeswoman for the duchess said: "Unfortunately the jewels ended up in the luggage hold, which is not the normal procedure. It was a normal procedure. They should have been carried as hand luggage, but the duchess does not in any way hold Jane Dunn-Bul-



lar responsible for what has happened. The duchess thinks that she will probably get them back. She is quite relaxed." The duchess, who was on a private visit to the US, had flown home by Concorde four hours earlier, in order to attend a charity concert.

The theft was only discovered when she unpacked at her eight-bedroom rented house in Kingsbourne, Surrey.

The duchess had worn the jewels, which are insured, at a White House reception hosted by President Clinton. She had business and charity meetings during her four-day

stay, and attended a launch for her Budgie books at the New York store Bloomingdale's.

Scotland Yard said detectives based at Heathrow and British Airways security chiefs are carrying out an urgent investigation.

Police have not ruled out the possibility that the jewels were stolen at JFK airport in New York, where an investigation is also under way.

The duchess is not the first member of the royal family to suffer at the hands of thieves. In February last year, a burglar gained access to the private apartments of the Prince of Wales at St James's Palace and stole royal heirlooms. Some were later recovered.

The duchess, who earlier this year told Hello magazine that she had to work for a living, receives most of her income from the Budgie character.

The industry, which includes spin-offs like Budgie bubble bath, cutlery and mugs, is said to earn about \$3 million a year.

The tabloids have not been slow to point out that although she claims to be broke and sought to economise last year by sacking her nanny, she has kept on a staff of driver, cook, butler, and general assistant, at a reputed cost of \$3,200 a month.

No police action on Somerville photos

Owen Bowcott

NO LEGAL action is to be taken against the ITN newsreader Julia Somerville or her partner, Jeremy Dixon, following the police seizure of family snapshots of her young daughter in the bath.

The announcement from Scotland Yard last night was welcomed by Miss Somerville, who has insisted that the pictures were taken at a wholly innocent family occasion.

The police inquiry began in late October after a film developer at Boots in Covent Garden, London, called them in after seeing the photographs of the seven-year-old child.

When Mr Dixon, aged 56, arrived at the shop to collect the prints he was arrested by officers from Scotland Yard's paedophile and child pornography unit.

Miss Somerville, aged 48, was detained shortly afterwards at their home in Muswell Hill, north London.

The story broke in the national press and Sheldon Atkinson, the 24-year-old developer who had informed the

police, was subsequently suspended when it was discovered he had spoken to the Sun newspaper about the photographs.

In a statement released through ITN last night, Miss Somerville said: "There has been a deplorable invasion of my privacy and that of my family. [Last night's] statement confirms the truth of my original statement at the start of this ordeal."

In a later statement, Scotland Yard said it had decided to take no further action following advice from the Crown Prosecution Service.

"The case was thoroughly investigated by experienced officers in the child pornography and paedophilia unit as well as officers from an expert child protection team."

"Nakedness in pictures in itself is not an issue for the police to investigate. However, the police are bound to investigate when they are told that photographs of a child may be indecent."

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children maintained that the film laboratory had acted correctly in contacting the police. Scotland Yard last night added its approval.

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Sketch

Going cheap but ain't he beautiful



Simon Hoggart

DON'T know why people say they can't understand John Prescott. I understand him perfectly. Perhaps it's because we're both from Hull. At this time of year, when the foggy dark came early and the lights swung perilously from the market stalls, I used to love watching the traders sell gimcrack rubbish at unbeatable prices. Sounds much like the House of Commons.

Not only am I gonna sell you this beautiful 35 piece dinner service, I'm going to throw in this gorgeous canteen of cutlery, innit lovely darling, and this fabulous gravy boat, look at that craftsmanship, and am I gonna charge you a tanner, no I am not, am I gonna ask you for nine quid, no not even nine quid, tell yer what, I dunno what's the matter with me, this is what I'll give yer on top of all this...

Like Mr Prescott they had more things to say than the time required to say them. The words tumbled over each other, like unruly children running indoors. Whole words and clauses, entire sentences were lost in the headlong rush to the close of sale. But every one listening knew precisely what was meant.

This is the difference between Mr Prescott and, say, John Major. Mr Major speaks in clear, largely grammatical sentences. But you can puzzle for hours to work out what he actually means.

Yesterday Mr Prescott was speaking on the last day of the Budget debate. The thoughts came one after another in clear, tightly bound clusters, like the electronic pulses which feed a computer. We were bowling along Mr Prescott's Opinion Superhighway, with no cones or speed limits to slow us down.

On private financing "We were talking about this dis-patch box when they said we couldn't have!" Would Labour

raise taxes? "We will make the appropriate decision at the level of time!"

What lessons can we learn from more prosperous nations? "Any visit to these countries knows it is much as much public investment as private investment."

"That has always been our case, always our problem we address ourselves to." (I can't quite recall what that referred to.)

Long words were reduced to a few syllables to save time. "Competence... devaluation." Then, towards the end, this ringing slogan: "It's not just how much you spend, but how much you spend!"

The speech was breathtaking. Eight times Michael Fabricant stood up to intervene, and eight times he was slapped down before Mr Prescott finally gave way.

(I gather Mr Fabricant is thinking of using his doctorate, in the hope of being taken more seriously by his colleagues. I strongly advise against this. "Dr Fabricant" sounds silly, like "Dr De-mento" or "Dr Jack Cunningham". He might end up being called "Dr Strangelocks".) As I say, I don't wish to be condescending to Mr Prescott. The audience knew what he meant, and they half believed it, in the way that the crowds at the market stall were tempted, even though they knew the pattern would rub off the gravy boat after three washes.

And Mr Heseltine was worse. His speech was the same farrago of meaningless statistics, yanked out of context and pressed into servitude, except that he does a more upmarket patter.

"Listen, look at this. Servies were smashing stuff. Am I going to charge you 10 grand? No, I'm not even asking eight grand, just gimme 5,000 nicker and I'll throw in this Meissen fondue set!"

Quite the naftest moment came at the end when he quoted a doggerel poem by Fleur Adcock:

"In the dream I was kissing John Prescott... we were leaning awfully forward, lips out-thrust, certain protuberances under our clothing brushing each other's fronts..."

Mr Prescott looked deeply pained as Heseltine ploughed on. Perhaps because his wife was listening from the gallery.

Review

Citizen Gates's virtual vision

Robin Hunt

The Road Ahead

Bill Gates

THE thing was about Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane*, at least he had his Rosebud. At least he got into trouble over girls, and had the good grace to make his X-rated gothic nightmare. Until yesterday's reports that Microsoft is being investigated over claims that its Windows 95 deliberately disables rival Internet software, we have enjoyed no such excitement with our very own Kane, Bill Gates. True or not, the suggestion does introduce a certain snaky charm to the man who founded Microsoft.

This is a quality sadly lacking in *Citizen Gates's* 286 pages of blue skies, nirvana — and not a mention of God anywhere.

The nearest we get to personal revelation is on page 206: "I used to date a woman who lived in a different city. We spent a lot of time together on e-mail. And we figured out a way we could sort of go to the movies together. We'd find a film that was playing at about the same time in both our cities. We'd drive to our respective theatres, chatting on our cellular phones. We'd watch the movie, and on our way home we'd use our cellular phones to discuss the show."

Passionate times ahead, then? The problem with *The Road Ahead* is that it is full of this bloodless no fluids please we're on-line future-speak. Sure Gates has the vision thing; he's had that far longer than most of us, but he isn't

exactly a preacher, more the conference speaker who gets the first slot after lunch. Functional, at best, combining a host of the most "basic" computer facts with the Teflon utopianism of a successful 19th century medicine man. *The Road Ahead* reads as if Nicholas Wittichell had rewritten *Wired* magazine.

It offers an easy infobahn view that should appeal to everyone — if they can stomach the leaden prose. Hence: "It is human nature to find ways to convert synchronous communications into asynchronous forms."

It tries in vain to make Gates a Lord Reith of the Net waves. A social thinker.

Gates's thesis is commonplace. Open Net access to all, learning for life, global communication, lovely talk-to-granny-video-conferences, e-mail. Gates feels free to leave the social problems to some government somewhere.

But not all social problems. "When teachers do excellent work and prepare wonderful materials, only their few dozen pupils benefit each year," Gates writes.

What he means is that if Microsoft were to own test-tube material then all that thinking could be turned into software. Windows, not only 95, but 98, 2004 and 3964 as well.

He is a rich young man, with seemingly only virtual interests; one who goofed off from Harvard, where he enjoyed poker more than studying.

Who knows, if he'd stayed on he might even have dated more women in the same city. Or realised that being a havenot was about more than not possessing a lap-top computer.

Addictive impact of scratchcards to be reviewed by Labour

Andrew Cull

Media Correspondent

LABOUR is to conduct a review of the National Lottery, ranging from the addictive impact of scratchcards to the regional imbalance in the distribution of grants.

The party's National Lottery advisory group will meet in January and a report out-

lining priorities is expected by the spring. News of the review coincided with Peter Davis, director general of the Office of the National Lottery, saying scratchcards were at the soft end of the gambling spectrum and less addictive than fruit machines.

Labour's initiative has been ordered by Jack Cunningham, the shadow heritage secretary.



PARTS of England felt the full blast of winter yesterday as freezing conditions and the first snowfalls of the season played havoc with commuters and emergency services, writes Sue Quinn.

Forecasters were predicting that the big chill, as seen above at Shoreham in Kent, would continue all week.

Snowfalls of up to five inches in some parts of the country, caused by an easterly airstream from Siberia, started over eastern coastal areas in the early hours of yesterday, with the freeze quickly spreading.

Drivers in many parts of England faced miserable journeys home last night, with motoring organisations and emergency services reporting widespread problems as snow and ice made many roads treacherous.

In Sussex, driving snow left many roads blocked, while in Kent, big tailbacks built up on the M20 as minor accidents held up traffic.

A Met Office spokesman said that the wintry weather would mostly be confined to Sussex, Kent and East Anglia, although the rest of the South might get a sprinkling of snow.

The RAC's head of campaigns, Edmund King, advised motorists to check their cars had anti-freeze, to carry a warm blanket in case of breakdowns, and to

allow more time for their journeys.

William Hill cut the odds against snow falling in London on December 25 from 10-1 to 8-1, while Ladbrokes slashed theirs from 7-1 to 5-1, after taking a £3,500 bet from one punter in Acton, west London.

Weather, G2 page 16

Teachers savage Blair school plan

'Whipping boys' fear as Labour pledges to get tough on failure

John Carvel

Education Editor

TONY BLAIR yesterday ran into a hail of criticism from teaching unions when he produced a blueprint for tough action against failing schools and incompetent teachers, without being specific about the extra resources needed to help them improve.

He launched Labour's proposals for improving educational standards with a promise to "sweep away the second rate and tackle head-on the half-baked and the ineffective", adding: "There will be zero tolerance of failure from any government I lead."

The document included a battery of measures to encourage more effective schooling, including a General Teaching Council to boost professional standards,

new qualifications for heads, the introduction of language teaching in every primary school and national homework targets from age seven.

Mr Blair reserved his strongest language for bad teachers and for parents who did not do enough to make sure their children succeed at school. "If you want your child to learn the three Rs, you've got to instill in them a fourth R — responsibility," he said.

Teachers' representatives rounded on the proposals, with one warning teachers could become whipping boys as the main parties vied to be seen as toughest on standards.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, added that Labour's plan to give local authorities the job of supervising standards would create an expensive dual bureaucracy involving councils and the schools' inspectorate.

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers, said: "There is not a snowball's chance in hell of realising these plans without substantial additional expenditure. I must warn Labour that it cannot expect all these changes to be delivered by teachers for nothing."

He welcomed Labour proposals for maximum class sizes of 30 in infant schools and extra payments to encourage the best teachers to stay in the classroom, but plans for more after-school activities and a raft of other measures would create excessive workload.

John Sutton, general secretary of the Secondary Heads Association, regretted that the document "concentrated on teacher-bashing and head-bashing". Even the small minority of incompetents had employment rights which might be threatened.

Doug McAvo, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, the largest of the teachers' unions, put out a more helpful state-

ment recognising the need to help ineffective teachers to change careers.

This was overtaken, however, when the union spotted a mistake in Mr Blair's presentation, claiming 30 per cent of schools were failing when the Office for Standards in Education puts the figure at 2 per cent. The Labour leader had intended to quote school inspectorate estimates that 30 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory.

"It is unfortunate that yet again politicians want to introduce proposals on the back of false claims of mass failure," Mr McAvo said.

However, union opposition may help Labour convince the electorate that its policies against incompetent teachers are at least as vigorous as the Government's.

Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Sec-

retary, has been trying over recent months to shift the education debate on to the issue of improving standards and away from school funding and structure. She has not been helped, however, by John Major's determination to focus attention on grant-maintained schools and the assisted places scheme.

Last night she gave Labour "one cheer" for adopting proposals which the party had spent 16 years opposing.

Mr Blair said Labour could not promise to attract better teachers by paying them more, since that would depend on economic circumstances.

It was particularly important for a left-of-centre party to recognise that the amount of money spent was not the only issue, he said.

Leader comment, page 8

Labour abstain in tax vote

Michael White

Political Editor

THE five-day Commons debate on Kenneth Clarke's third Budget package ended last night amid furious charge and counter-charge between the front benches over taxation, culminating in Labour abstaining on a vote to cut VAT on food instead of voting against them — for the first time in 16 years of opposition.

With Gordon Brown, the shadow chancellor, determined to nail the traditional Conservative jibe that Labour is still "the high tax party", Tony Blair's team concentrated its fire on a forlorn bid to reduce the unpopular position of VAT on domestic heat and fuel from 8 to 5 per cent, the minimum rate allowed under EU rules.

The move, an echo of last December's successful drive to stop the VAT rate being raised to 17.5 per cent, was intended to underline Labour's "fair tax" credentials by helping poorer consumers. But last night it prompted the Scottish Nationalist leader, Alex Salmond, to recall that when the SNP tried the same tactic in January, Labour denounced it as a "cynical ploy" and abstained.

In the run-up to last night's vote, Opposition whips were resigned to some leftwingers voting with the Liberal Democrats to cut income tax, because, leading Lib Dem said, the money should have been spent on education. They accused Labour of "timidity about the long-term good of the economy."

In a combative debating exchange with his Labour shadow, John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, accused the Opposition of planning to restore the upper rate of income tax to 60 per cent.

Mr Heseltine revealed that a Labour frontbencher, Nigel Griffiths, MP for Edinburgh South, had put down a parliamentary question on November 2, asking the Chancellor what the yield would be of introducing a 60 per cent upper tax rate.

Accusing Mr Heseltine of being "the chief propagandist of the Tory Party", Mr Prescott declared: "It is the low paid, the people who desperately need to have some assistance, who are the ones who have suffered and carried the heaviest burden of tax."

Mr Clarke said that Labour could not oppose the overall budget strategy without being specific about tax cuts it opposed.

But Mr Prescott renewed Labour's attack that claims that the Budget would be worth 29 a week to average families rested on assumed growth next year, and — average pay rises of 4 per cent.

Rates cut hopes nipped in bud, page 11

Doctor 'had no qualms' over holiday with MP

Alex Bellor

THE 32-year-old man who shared a bed with the Tory MP David Ashby had no qualms about doing so, despite being aware of allegations they were having a gay affair.

Ciaran Kilduff said in the High Court that he was neither embarrassed nor did he consider it "risky" to share the double bed in a French hotel because he did not believe anyone would find out.

Asked whether it struck him as odd that a 38-year-old man — old enough to be his father — should have suggested they share a bedroom, Dr Kilduff replied tersely: "No, it didn't."

Dr Kilduff, a soft-spoken Irishman, was giving evidence on the tenth day of Mr Ashby's libel action against the Sunday Times, over the newspaper's allegation that the two men were lovers. It claims that on at least three occasions, including the episode in France in January 1994, the men were physically intimate.

Times Newspapers Ltd and former Sunday Times editor Andrew Neil deny libel.

Dr Kilduff told Mr Justice Morland and a jury that his solicitors had issued a statement denying the affair and followed up with writs against three tabloid newspapers.

The doctor's sexuality was questioned by the newspaper's counsel, Richard



Ciaran Kilduff... 'not risky to share hotel bed'

Hartley QC. Mr Hartley asked: "Did you have a girlfriend at that time?" Dr Kilduff said he did.

Mr Hartley continued: "When you say girlfriends and maintain how intimate have your relationships been with your girlfriends?" Dr Kilduff laughed before answering: "I don't presume to discuss my love life in public view."

He said that he and Mr Ashby met in 1982 and a month later, after only one other meeting, they flew to the US together. The doctor, who had already booked a holiday to see friends, recommended a cheap flight to the MP, who was also planning a trip there.

Mr Hartley said: "You must have been amazed. A person

you met casually... you mention you are going to America and the next thing you know is he is booked on the same flight. You didn't think he was being a little bit forward?"

Dr Kilduff: "Brash? You know what politicians are like. Some people might. But as a doctor my business is to establish a rapport with people within a 10-minute conversation, so I tend to be quite open with people."

Earlier in the day, Mr Ashby's Harley Street doctor told the court that the MP had told him he had been impotent since about 1989. Dr Lewis Sevvit said Mr Ashby first consulted him in May 1993, before he separated from his wife Silvia, complaining of headaches and of his inability to have an erection in the morning.

He was given medication but there had been no improvement, Dr Sevvit said.

He said Mr Ashby was clearly suffering from stress, which was the result of several factors including domestic problems, losses at Lloyd's, and trouble with the family business. But the MP had never mentioned homosexuality during their consultations.

Mr Hartley asked: "If a person is having a mid-life crisis, and is discovering that he is more homosexual than heterosexual, that would lead to [symptoms] you have been describing?" Dr Sevvit replied: "That is a possibility. The case continues."

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Country-wide protest: A striking rail worker (left) drums up support in Lille, while a child on the Paris march says 'I too feel concerned'

France and Britain compared

WAGES/CONDITIONS	WAGES/CONDITIONS
Full-time employment, £ per week	Wages
467	396
Average state pension, £ per week	Pensions
167	58.85
Average annual holidays, days	Holidays
25	28
Weekly working hours, full-time staff	Working week
39.8	43.4
Contributions from average pay packet, %	Social Security
18.5	7.7
Typical monthly earnings of couple one salary, two children, £	Wages
975	1,145
Direct/indirect taxes as a % of national output (GDP)	Tax
44.2	33.8
Public sector employees as a % of total employment	Public sector
24.4	15.2

French national railways, SNCF, has an accumulated debt of £23bn. The UK's total national debt (PSBR) is £29bn (1995 estimate.)

Dissent and despair on streets of Bordeaux

The manifestos of support were outnumbered by spent flare cartridges **Alex Duval Smith** reports from Bordeaux

FLORENCE Boisseau and her poodle were determined to show they were not among the 62 per cent of French people who are said to support the strikes which have paralysed the country. So they staged a brave counter-demonstration.

At 10am yesterday, in the biting winter wind, they positioned themselves outside the gates of the neo-classical city hall. Mrs Boisseau, aged 55, had been given the morning off by her estate agent boss.

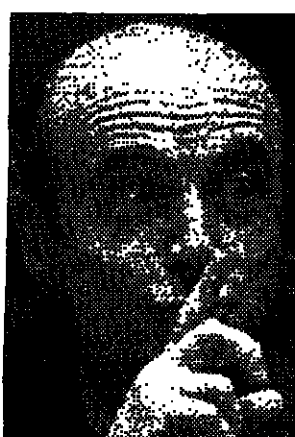
Her tartan scarf and the poodle's jacket virtually matched and seemed to be obligatory attire for the elite women of this bourgeois city. But Mrs Boisseau's 200 manifestos, photocopied on bright yellow A4 paper, clashed violently with her camel-hair coat.

"There are 700,000 people in this city and most of them think the government's savings are necessary," she declared. But her face dropped at sight of the demonstrators advancing down all five lanes of the Cours d'Albret avenue.

As 50,000 people, letting off red flares and blowing foghorns, marched towards Mrs Boisseau, a young man in a suit took one of her manifestos, explaining that he was an unemployed accountant.

"With the postal strike, I am not receiving my benefit. These demonstrators can afford to strike; the unemployed are too busy trying to make ends meet," he told her.

The town hall square soon became clogged with demonstrators from more walks of life than in previous protests against the government's proposals for slimming the wel-



Alain Juppé defiant during yesterday's debate

fare state. But they seemed less focused. Students — ostensibly there to press for more higher education funding — shouted "Ho-ho-bo-Chi-Minh, Che-Che-Guevara". Postal workers on yellow bicycles shouted rather unoriginally: "Alain Juppé resign". There was a banner against nuclear testing.

The most vocal and in-

formed protesters were medical staff from four hospitals. Béatrice Lassus, a paediatric nurse aged 36, said: "The health system has been abused for years but the answer is not to fine us all, as the government seems to want to do with its new social security tax. They should start by penalising the rich."

Claude Bouvard, an auxiliary aged 35, added: "We are moving towards an American system where there is care for the rich and none for the poor. Or the British system, with waiting lists."

The medical staff had thought up a variety of solutions, including extra taxes for health industries, which by nature have few staff.

Unions had promised that yesterday's action would include private sector workers. Lorry drivers blocked routes to Bordeaux in the morning rush-hour but were not to be seen on the demonstration.

However, Françoise Boisseau, a cashier at a Carrefour hypermarket, aged 51, had come with a dozen colleagues. "I have a decent salary and can afford to take the day off,"

she said. "But many people who work in jobs like mine are on short-term contracts and neither dare nor can afford to join a demonstration."

Mr Juppé is mayor of Bordeaux, but Olivier Renou, aged 30, said: "He is not one of us. His only link with Bordeaux is that his parents live near here."

Mr Renou, who works in the reading room of the regional archives, was marching with a colleague, Patricia Latorse, aged 38.

Single and living in a two-room flat in the suburbs of Bordeaux, Ms Latorse said she could not afford higher social security contributions.

"I earn Fr7,600 (£1,000) a month. Of that, Fr1,500 goes in contributions, Fr2,000 in rent and Fr800 in tax. That

leaves me Fr3,300 to live on. The demonstration grew as it criss-crossed the city, ending up in front of the sandstone Grand Théâtre. A man with a megaphone spent 15 minutes reading a list of the occupations which were represented. They included road workers, fire officers, teachers, college pupils, the media, telecom and rail staff.

But Alain Baqué, selling magazines in a kiosk, was unimpressed. "Three years ago, I took part in a protest to safeguard hunting rights. There were 100,000 of us," he said.

In front of the city hall, Mrs Boisseau and her poodle were nowhere to be seen. Dustmen were sweeping up her abandoned yellow manifestos, vastly outnumbered by spent flare cartridges.

Striking moments

- Twelfth day of national rail strike, eighth day of Metro and bus stoppage;
- Ninth week of student unrest;
- Trade union marches throughout country, including private sector workers for first time;
- Custom officers strike;
- 120 out of 130 mail sorting offices closed. No deliveries in big cities;
- Lorry drivers, teachers, hospital staff, bank clerks, airline crew and prison warders join other public sector demonstrators;
- Uniformed police refuse to hand out traffic fines in protest against overwork;
- Big department stores, Ga-

- leries Lafayette and Printemps, report loss of half their December business;
- Panic buying causes closure of many suburban petrol stations;
- Supermarket sales of basic foodstuffs increase fourfold;
- Sports stores report a boom in bicycle and roller skates sales;
- Retired army officers' association appeals to its 40,000 members to chauffeur strikebound workers;
- 1,700 private buses again pressed into service around Paris, but many have seats to spare after reports of four-or-five-hour journeys;
- Weather forecasters called out.

The ages of revolution

1789

John Mullin looks back on turbulent years of struggle in the history of modern France:

Who: Third estate, artisans and peasants versus Louis XVI, nobility and Swiss and German mercenaries.
Why: Who runs France. Heads roll. Feudalism no more.
Outcome: Liberté, égalité, fraternité. Vive la République.



1830

Who: Workers, students and the petty bourgeoisie versus Louis XVIII's grandson, Charles X, and the Prince de Polignac, a fanatical reactionary.
Why: Folks miffed at reactionary policy and the rush back to Catholic Church orthodoxy.
Outcome: Lafayette, heading republicans, and Louis-Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, leader of the constitutional monarchists, make up. Charles X departs.

1848

Who: Same sort of deal as last time. Republicans never quite forgave Louis-Philippe for hijacking their revolution of 18 years earlier.
Why: More lefty philosophers; suffrage restriction and crop failure all factors. When political banquet-meetings are banned, street demonstrations begin.
Outcome: Louis-Philippe loses out like Charles X before him and flees to England.

1968

Who: Students and workers take on Fifth Republic as endemic trouble in Paris flares after police violence at a Sorbonne demo.
Why: Students want more rights, workers want more money.
Outcome: Fizzles out in a month as De Gaulle regains initiative, dissolves assembly and wins handsomely. But he tries to follow this with referendums on constitutional changes the next year. Loses and is out.

1995

Who: Rail workers, energy, bus and tube staff, postal workers, primary school teachers, telecom workers and students versus rightwing prime minister Alain Juppé.
Why: Welfare cuts prompted by President Chirac's desire to make European monetary union a priority, entailing two years of austerity to cut public deficit to 3 per cent of GDP.
Outcome: To be continued.

John Kinsella looks from the outside like the kind of Home Counties archetype much beloved of sitcom writers. The only problem is that the retired accountant, Tory voter and former commuter has more soul than Ray Davies and Damon Albarn put together. He is extraordinarily charming, thoughtful, articulate, patently decent and, above all, complicated. Damn.

G2 cover story

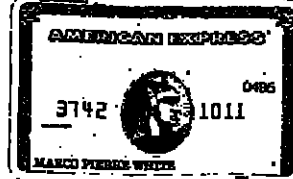
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Streets ahead... the Manor Estate in Sheffield (left) where tenant power has been hard to find, and 'the Jungle' of Halton Moor, Leeds, where local people took over the day-to-day running of the estate

PHOTOGRAPHS: DON MAPIRE

How self-help is being stifled on estates of despair

James Meikle
Community Affairs Editor

INFLEXIBLE tax and social security rules threatened self-help schemes to revive Britain's most deprived estates, a report for the charitable Joseph Rowntree Foundation said yesterday.

Unemployed people and volunteers seeking to lift their

communities out of poverty, poor education, and improve dilapidated homes were often afraid to get involved in formal arrangements to barter skills, time and goods because they might attract the attention of the Inland Revenue and benefits agency, according to the report's author, Marilyn Taylor.

Yet financial institutions would deny residents credit simply because of their past

code and food co-operatives found it hard to compete with commercial businesses.

Ms Taylor, reader in social policy at Brighton university, called for a 20-year programme to tackle increasing social polarisation between rich and poor that saw 2,000 estates piling up "statistics of despair" despite the efforts of tenants to improve matters, many of which have been closely monitored in research

studies for the foundation. Residents should be given training and money, including National Lottery cash, to help put them at the centre of long-term regeneration projects.

"Flagship initiatives and professionals generally move on. Residents and their children are the people who will still be there when all the fanfares have died down."

Big rebuilding projects

should employ local people, and moving in and out of jobs should be made a less risky business. "The marginal benefits of getting a job... may be outweighed not only by the costs of child care and transport, but also by the difficulty of getting back into the benefits system if the job doesn't work out... Withdrawal of benefit as a deterrent can lead to crime."

Credit unions, skills ex-

changes, and more established local exchange trading schemes could all build confidence, although such alternative economies should not be allowed simply to increase the isolation of estates.

"Formalisation may destroy them. It certainly attracts the attention of the benefits office and the Inland Revenue and more experiments are needed... to overcome these problems... We

are not talking about turning a blind eye to all sorts of moonlighting."

The report coincides with the official opening by Prince Charles today of the National Tenants Resource Centre, a 28-bedroom residential centre, built from government grants and company and charitable donations. Its chairman is the architect, Sir Richard Rogers, and Anne Power, from the London

School of Economics, another expert on resident participation, was a driving force behind its creation.

It will train up to 4,000 tenants a year in a range of skills, from managing regeneration projects to fighting racism.

Unleashing the Potential, York Publishing Services, 84 Halffield Road, Layerthorpe, York YO3 7XQ, £10.50 plus £1 p&p.

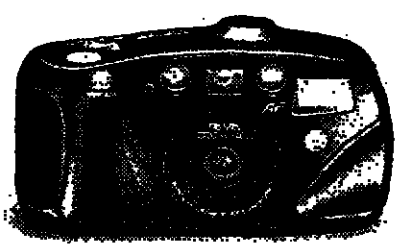


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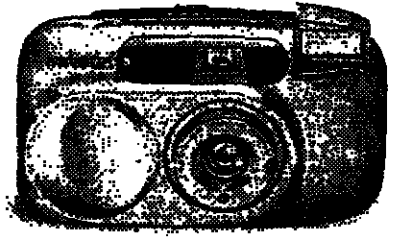
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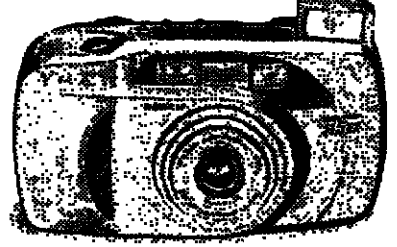
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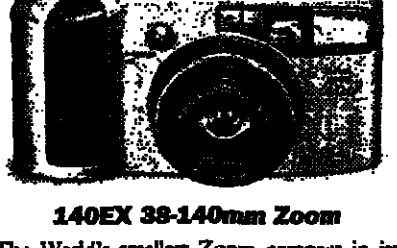
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All Minolta Zoom compacts shown above come boxed in kits, with soft case, 3 rolls of Fuji 400 Super G film and battery.

People power is bringing hope

A group of tenants in Leeds is showing the way, Martin Wainwright says

THE Halton Moor estate in Leeds has had a lively reputation since day one, when the first tenants included the 10-year-old Keith Waterhouse. But behind the youth crime — the estate is nicknamed the Zoo and the Jungle — a much more significant story is taking place.

"We've got real power now," says Dorothy Sheldon, shoe shop manageress turned hustler for government borrowing powers, whose tenant colleagues have won genuine control of day-to-day decision making on the 1,600-home estate.

"When we approach local companies for sponsorship or partnership, they listen to us because we've got a track record of helping ourselves. Local people are listening too, because they know we're not the same as the council, and we're here to stay."

The success of Halton Moor's elected estate management board, in spite of continuing problems with a small but persistent group of criminals, stems from a sudden, unexpected galvanising of opinion in the late 1980s, which ambushed and wrecked a Government Housing Action Trust scheme.

More than 500 people crowded a protest meeting against a plan to refurbish — but then almost certainly privatise — the 1930s "garden village".

"You could see the attrac-

tion — we're close to the motorways and airport, with a golf course and Temple Newsam park right next door," says Mrs Sheldon. "But the people who live here wouldn't have been able to afford to stay."

The battle ended with local and Whitehall backing for an estate action area, the houses remaining in Leeds city council's ownership but with tenants taking over the day-to-day helm.

"There are 12 of us voted in to the board by about 700 members of the tenants' association, which comes under friendly society rules," says Mrs Sheldon, who has lived on Halton Moor for 28 years and wouldn't move anywhere else. Two owner occupiers are elected as well, and three ward councillors plus the city's housing chairman fill the other places. The borrowing of £23 million has been arranged with the Department of the Environment, through Leeds' share of the national housing investment finance programme.

The continuity this gives — until 2001 — is proving the board's strongest asset, underpinning the sort of steady repair and renewal programme (almost half the houses in seven years) which has suffered problems in comparable areas, like Sheffield's Manor estate, where tenant power has been harder to find.

"The worst enemy in areas like this is raising hopes then dropping them. We had it with the crime prevention unit, which brought us eight extra police for a year. It was wonderful but then the funding ended, and things started to slide back."

Graham Rawle's LOST CONSONANTS 5
51 Postcards

Every evening he took a short stroll round the garden

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TV group in merger to join contenders for site that will attract £100m in lottery cash



On the waterfront: the Stratford site in east London

PHOTOGRAPHS: FRANK MARTIN

Greenwich and Birmingham vie for millennium honour

Maev Kennedy reports on the finalists in competition to stage exhibition

GREENWICH and the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham emerged as the favourites to hold the Millennium Exhibition when the bids from would-be operators were lodged yesterday. Only two operators remained out of the original shortlist of four as two merged to form a new consortium.

The M2000 Group, assembled by Touche Ross, and the MAI consortium of television and finance interests, which is part of the group that won the Channel 5 television franchise, have amalgamated to put in a joint bid.

Their preferred site is Greenwich, but they would use part of the Stratford East site on the other side of the Thames.

The design consultancy

Imagination lodged detailed plans for an exhibition using existing and new buildings at the NEC, the only site offering to become a co-investor, putting in up to £50 million. The fourth shortlisted operator, Granada, dropped out three weeks ago.

The other shortlisted sites, Derby City and Stratford East, are still in with a chance, as both bidders outlined options to transfer their schemes to other sites.

The Millennium Commissioners will announce their choice for the year-long exhibition, intended to attract 30 million visitors, early in the new year. They will be supporting the chosen scheme with a grant from National Lottery funds of up to £100 million.

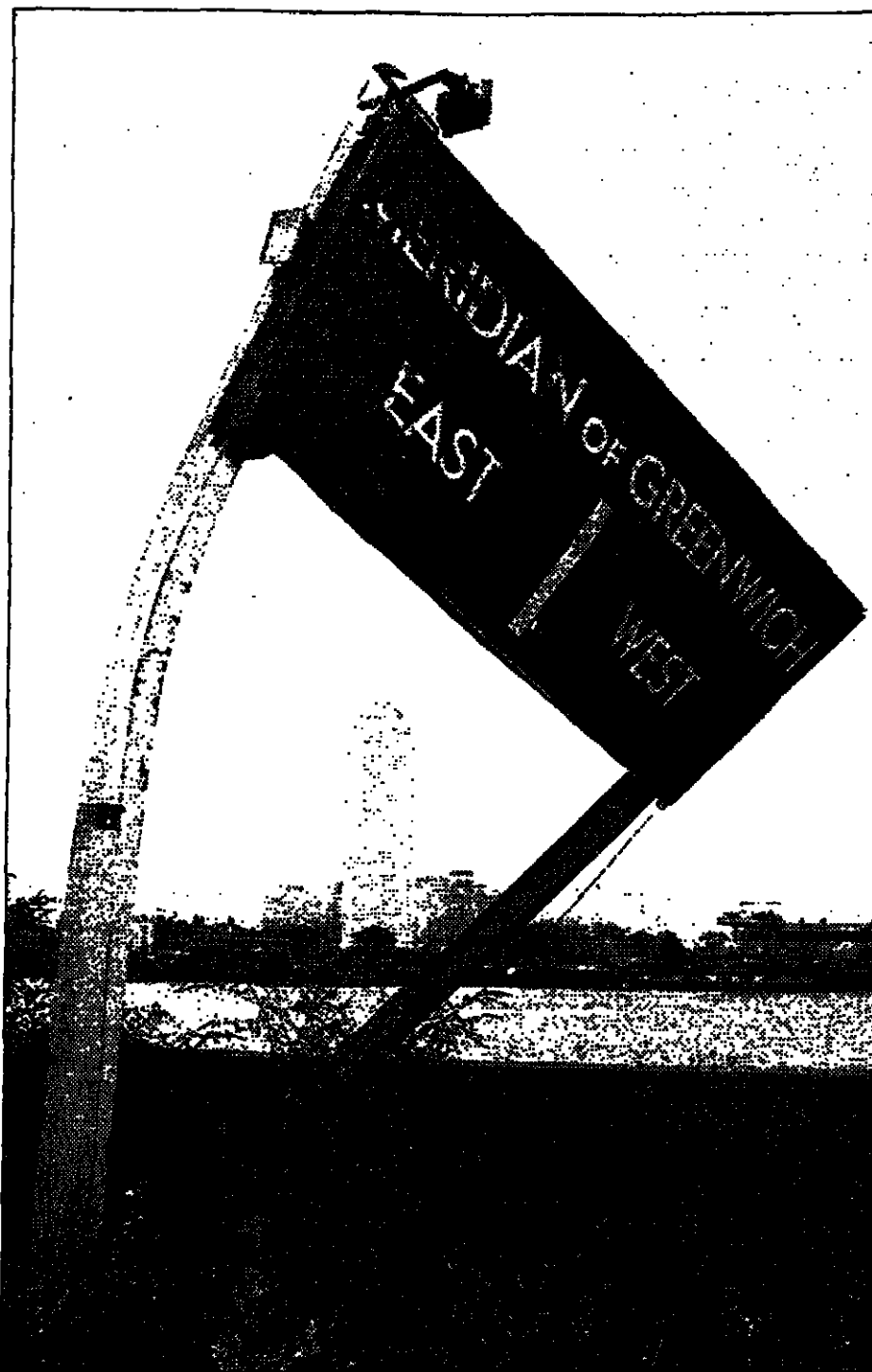
A spokeswoman for the

commissioners said last night: "We are delighted to receive two such exciting and competitive bids."

Birmingham is convinced that the very tight time scale means the NEC is the only chance of the exhibition being ready in time. It is also the only site, with the blessing of part-owner Birmingham City Council, prepared to become co-investors, putting in up to £50 million.

The Greenwich bid is headed by Sir Bob Scott, who led the efforts of Manchester to try to get the Olympic Games before finally succeeding in securing the Commonwealth Games for 2002.

All the site promoters found the competition bizarre. The site guidelines were only announced on June 1, leaving only a few months to come up with an idea big enough to attract 30 million people. The festival is to run from January 1 to December 31, 2000.



Marking time... The Greenwich site favoured by merged consortium

Home loan arrears ruling hope

Margaret Hughes
Personal Finance Editor

HOME BUYERS who have fallen into serious mortgage arrears may be saved from having their homes repossessed as a result of a ruling yesterday by the Court of Appeal.

More than 1,000 home buyers a week face having their homes repossessed. In a case involving a Wiltshire home owner whose arrears on her £90,000 mortgage had reached £20,000, three judges unanimously agreed that the full term of a mortgage should be the starting point for calculating a "reasonable period" for payment of arrears, rather than the maximum of four years normally agreed in the county courts.

Lord Justice Waite said the case was of relevance to all home mortgages as previously there had been little guidance on exactly what was "a reasonable period" for bringing payments up to date.

A Sharnbury county court judge had decided that a "reasonable period" for Christmas, to catch up on her arrears, was only four years, even though her 22-year mortgage had 13 more years to run. But the Appeal Court judges said the county court judge "fell into error" and sent the case back for a re-hearing.

Mrs Norgan became sole owner of Wickford Farmhouse, worth about £225,000, about nine years ago when her property developer husband sold his half share to raise business finance. The transaction involved Mrs Norgan taking out a £90,000 mortgage with the Guardian building society.

But Mrs Norgan, who has

lived with her husband, Richard, and their five sons in the period farmhouse at Tisbury, Wiltshire, since 1974, began to fall into arrears with the interest payments after her husband's business ran into difficulties. Under the terms of the mortgage the whole debt became immediately repayable.

The Cheltenham and Gloucester building society, which took over the Guardian building society, obtained a county court order for possession when her arrears totalled about £7,000 in April 1990. But at that time execution was suspended as Mrs Norgan made "strenuous efforts" to pay off her arrears.

However, in September 1992 a district judge refused to block the possession order any longer, and that decision was upheld by Judge O'Malley at Sharnbury county court in June.

But yesterday the appeal judges argued that the "logic and the spirit" of the law was that the court should take "the full term of the mortgage" as the starting point for deciding whether a mortgagor could maintain payment of arrears.

Later Mr Norgan said: "I hope this case helps a lot of other people. That was one of its purposes."

Sue Anderson, for the Council of Mortgage Lenders, said: "It is perfectly acceptable that people should have a fair chance to get back on to their feet."

But she was concerned that the ruling could tempt borrowers to take "a mortgage payments holiday" in the knowledge that if their case ever did go to court they would be given a long period to pay off arrears. "Debt rehabilitation is best done over as short a period as possible."

Bogus priest conned believers out of their cash

Owen Bowcott

ASICILIAN conman who posed as a Catholic priest, seduced two nuns, and claimed to be a brain surgeon, was last night behind bars awaiting extradition for a string of alleged frauds in Austria.

Even after York crown court jailed Angelo Malan-

nino for three months, doubts about what was fact and what was fantasy lingered. At five feet tall, the chubby 46-year-old had charmed his way through the city's charitable Christians.

Detective Constable Adam Harland said: "People were so taken in they hailed him as a local saint." It was only after a party held to celebrate his purchase of a dilapidated hos-

pital for conversion into an Aids hospice that suspicions were confirmed.

Held in a local Italian restaurant, Malanino became very drunk. "People thought it strange a priest should be shouting and swearing and chatting up the talent, including his host's Jamaican girl friend."

The prosecution asked for nine other fraud charges to be

left on the file. Malanino had arrived in Britain in April last year driving an Opel car which had clocked up £3,000 of over-the-odometer.

Rodney Jameson, prosecuting, said Malanino not only duped people into thinking he was a priest, but also posed as a brain surgeon, and claimed to be the heir to a vast fortune and the son of an Italian general. He admitted stealing

medical files and books from the National Hospital for Neurology in London, and said nothing in court.

Among his possessions when arrested were home-made rubber stamps for making bogus documents and a falsified letter from the Archbishop of Turin appointing him a local bishop. In York, Malanino had said Mass at St Wilfrid's church several

times. Local priests first challenged him when he failed to provide a *celebrat*, the document proving he had been ordained.

He had befriended the Italian owner of a local guest house and stayed there free. An architect had also been tricked into carrying out almost £40,000 worth of work for the scheme to convert the derelict hospital.

Lower drink-drive level rejected

Minister argues that changing the law will not change public behaviour

Keith Harper
Transport Editor

THE Government yesterday refused to lower the drink-drive alcohol limit as it launched its Christmas campaign to keep death off the roads.

The British Medical Association and some police forces want the limit reduced from 80mg per 100ml of blood to 50mg, but the Transport Minister, Steven Norris, said a change in the level did not necessarily result in a change of behaviour. Support for the drink-drive campaign might disappear if the limit were lowered.

David Williams, secretary of the Association of Chief Police Officers, said the association believed that deciding the level "was left to the Government and the scientists", but suggested that police forces might back a lower limit.

Mr Williams, chief constable of Surrey, said that for the first time this year, drink-drive statistics to be published on January 3 would cover all accidents involving drinking and driving, not just those in which there were injuries.

The television commercial at the centre of this year's

£1.2 million campaign against drink-driving shows a young man maimed through a drink-drive accident being spoon-fed by his mother. As she does so, the voice of his friends is heard in flashback, urging him to have another drink before going home for dinner.

Mr Norris hoped that the advertisement would strike home with young men between the ages of 18 and 24 who were three times more likely to be killed than drivers in their 40s.

"The campaign is aimed squarely at all those who continue to ignore the blindingly obvious fact that by drinking and driving you are more likely to kill yourself or somebody else."

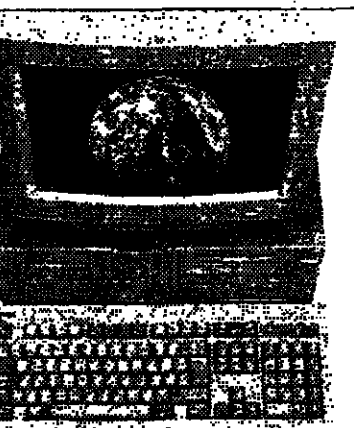
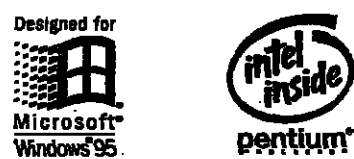
He believed that by putting the potential consequences of the thoughtless actions of a "selfish minority" in front of the public, the Government would be appealing to the instincts of this small group.

Mr Norris said that over the years the Government's message had hit home. The numbers killed on the roads in drink-drive accidents had been reduced from 1,500 to little over 500, but there was still a long way to go. The good news about the annual figure falling meant very little to the thousands of relatives and friends of the victims.

The AA's head of road safety, Andrew Howard, said AA research showed that 80 per cent of motorists wanted the legal limit cut. The key to the problem was to target the hard core of motorists who persisted in flouting the law.

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News in brief

Man found dead in police cell

A MAN was found dead in a police cell yesterday, half an hour after he was arrested. The Police Complaints Authority is to investigate the death of the alleged armed burglar in Brixton police station following a confrontation with arresting officers.

The man, black and in his 20s, has not been identified. Police were called to a break-in where a couple had been threatened at knifepoint. Scotland Yard said the suspect was chased and eventually lunged at the pursuing officers with a knife. "The police had to protect themselves with long batons to disarm him," a spokesman said. Half an hour after being placed in the cell he was found to have stopped breathing. — Owen Bowcott

Rebuke for 'miracle' claim

THE evangelist Morris Cerullo has been rebuked by the Advertising Standards Authority for making unsupported claims of miraculous healings. The authority upheld complaints from 19 people about newspapers and posters advertising Mr Cerullo's Mission to London meetings at Earl's Court.

Among the posters was one of a woman holding a baby and the caption: "They said I must not have a baby... Miracles happen." Another featured a picture of a boy holding a pair of crutches with a football at his feet with the headline: "They said I'd never stand on my own two feet!" Each poster carried the message: "Experience the healing power of God."

Complainants said the campaign exploited the vulnerable whose conditions could not be cured by medicine. Mr Cerullo's meetings. The advertisers maintained the posters were testimonials from people who believed they had been healed or their lives had changed by attending the meetings. — Andrew Culf

County Hall to become hotels

COUNTY Hall, the former home of the Greater London Council on the south bank of the Thames, is to be converted into two hotels with a total of more than 500 beds, it was announced yesterday.

The site, empty for nearly 10 years, was bought for £80 million by the Shirayama Corporation of Japan in 1985. The Whitbread group said it had agreed outline terms with Shirayama for a 318-room Travel Inn budget hotel and a 200-room four-star Marriott hotel within County Hall.

Charity to merge operation

THE Save the Children Fund, which announced £9 million spending cuts last week, is to merge its UK and overseas divisions and make its UK director, Mike Taylor, redundant. The charity blames a standstill in fund-raising. Mr Taylor, aged 48, has been director of Save the Children's UK and European division for three years. He has told colleagues he supports its merger with the charity's overseas division. — David Brindle

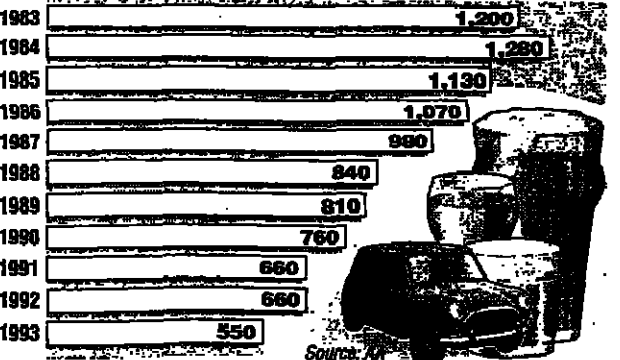
CPRE fights rural towns plan

PLANNERS should fight proposals for new towns and villages with populations of up to 10,000 and insist that developers concentrate on urban renewal instead, the Council for the Protection of Rural England said yesterday. Talk of new settlements to help meet government projections of 4.4 million new households by 2016 was undermining vital efforts to regenerate cities, and threatened unnecessary environmental damage, Tony Burton, the organisation's senior planner told a conference in Brussels.

"Most such developments risk being little more than remote housing estates in the countryside," he said. — James Meikle

Paying the penalty

Drink-drive related road deaths



Conviction

What the cost of a conviction this Christmas could mean

- ✗ Prison, disqualification and a fine of up to £5,000 will only be the initial cost of your conviction - an endorsement stays on your licence for 11 years.
- ✗ If you need to drive for your job you can expect redundancy if you lose your licence.
- ✗ 15% of those convicted lose their jobs as a result.
- ✗ If you don't need to drive but have a company car you will almost certainly lose it.
- ✗ After a drink drive ban expect an increase in insurance premiums by as much as five times.
- ✗ Don't bother trying to hire a car for ten years.

Former South Korean president and 12 business barons on corruption charges

Roh 'took £240m in bribes'

Kevin Rafferty in Tokyo

SOUTH KOREA was thrown into turmoil yesterday when the former president Roh Tae-woo and 12 leading industrialists were charged with bribery.

A senior prosecutor, Ahn Gang-min, said in a live television broadcast that Mr Roh, who has already confessed to creating a £430 million slush fund when he was president between 1988 and 1993, was charged with accepting £240 million in bribes. All but about £70 million of the slush fund had been accounted for, and his office had applied for permission to seize all Mr Roh's assets, he added.

The indictments extend the clean-up by Kim Young-sam, the first civilian president of South Korea for more than 30 years. They threaten to split the ruling party and throw business into disarray.

Mr Ahn announced that 12 businessmen, including the heads of seven of the country's biggest conglomerates, had been charged with giving bribes. They include Kim Woo-choong, chairman of Daewoo, and Lee Kun-hee, chairman of Samsung — both among the top 200 companies in the world — each accused of giving almost £20 million.

Mr Ahn said that 35 businessmen had been identified as having given bribes totalling £240 million, but he had decided to prosecute only the 12 responsible for clear criminal action.

To protect the economy, they were not detained in custody, he said. The Seoul stock market, which had been in the doldrums, rose on this news.

The 12 face prison sentences of up to five years if convicted. Mr Roh could get up to 10 years.

As in many countries, politicians in South Korea depend on business donations to stand for office. In a rapidly developing country, the rules on donations are not clear.

Several leading businessmen, notably Chung Ju-yung, founder of the Hyundai conglomerate, who ran against President Kim in 1992, complained that giving big donations was the price of survival.

The "miracle" which has lifted South Korea's annual per capita income from \$80 to \$5,000 in 30 years and made it the 11th biggest economy in the world is due to the conglomerates. In some fields, notably shipbuilding, semi-conductors and electronics, the Koreans are challenging Japanese domination.

But politicians resent their dependence on industry and regularly threaten to trim the conglomerates, thus encouraging more donations as the price of staying in business. A report from the Samsung Institute says that the unstable political climate could reduce growth from an expected 7.4 per cent to 6 per cent next year.

Sceptics in Seoul claim that President Kim has ordered the clean up to try to restore his sagging political fortunes. His approval rating has fallen from 90 per cent shortly after his inauguration in 1993 to 30 per cent.

He has always presented himself as "Mr Clean". But the fact that he left the opposition to ally himself with them President Roh in 1992 leaves him vulnerable within the Democratic Liberal Party to supporters of Mr Roh and Mr Chun.

The party chairman, Kim Yoon-ah, who was close to the previous presidents, offered his resignation yesterday, but President Kim would not accept it.



Vanquished... Students are led away during the 1980 army crackdown in Kwangju, a pivotal event in Korean history

The fathers of the nation and the blood of its children

Roh Tae-woo also faces trial for the 1980 massacre in Kwangju. **Nicholas Kristof** discovers the city's feelings and memories

HE LOST an eye when soldiers stamped on his face. His brother-in-law was shot dead, his younger brother was imprisoned, his parents went insane. But in some respects Lee Ji-hyun is a remarkably lucky man. He lived.

He survived the massacre of democracy demonstrators in the provincial capital Kwangju in May 1980, an incident which has haunted South Korea ever since. As he plucked his false eye from its socket and pointed to the scars on his face, Mr Lee reflected on the forthcoming trial of two former presidents for ordering the massacre.

"They should be executed," he said. "Unless we execute them, how can we put this all behind us?"

Few people expect that Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo will face the gallows. But they are in prison, and they are expected to go on trial next year for staging a coup in 1979 and ordering the Kwangju massacre. On the lowest estimate almost 200 people were killed. Some put the number in the thousands.

For those in Kwangju who have fought for 15 years to have the massacre investigated and the culprits punished, this is a moment to savour. Mr Lee has

campaign to honour the victims, and has been imprisoned twice — once for 30 months — for his efforts. The massacre was a pivotal event in modern Korean history, nurturing radicalism and anti-Americanism in a generation of youth.

Students at Seoul National University were once asked to identify the greatest tragedy in Korean history since 1945. The professor who designed the survey assumed that they would say the Korean War, but, overwhelmingly, they named the Kwangju massacre.

At Mangwol Dong cemetery, where 125 of the victims are buried, a light snow was falling on Monday. But an unusually large number of visitors walked between the graves paying tribute.

"The spirits will be relieved a bit," said Kim

Jae-young, aged 59. "Their anguish has been soothed."

Yu Tae-chung, a grave-digger at the cemetery for the past 19 years, knows the victims he buried as if they were members of his family. He introduced Choi Mi-ae, who died eight months pregnant. Her tombstone carries the inscription: "Darling, you were an angel. I'll see you again in Heaven."

The grave of Bang Kwang-bum, aged 10 when he died, carries the photograph of a serious child staring solemnly at the camera. The former presidents

should be punished to the full extent of the law, Mr Yu said. Then, reminded that they face the death penalty, he reconsidered. "Execution? I'm not sure I'd go that far. Chun and Roh were fathers of this nation, after all. So I don't really know what punishment they should get. But I

Protesters armed themselves with weapons and briefly ruled the city. Ten days later the army moved in

suppose if they're not executed, they should get life sentences.

Mr Chun set the stage for the Kwangju massacre when he responded to democracy demonstrations by imposing martial law throughout South Korea. Next day there were demon-

strations in Kwangju, and the military government's bloody crackdown provoked a public uprising.

Protesters armed themselves with weapons taken from armories, and briefly ruled the city. Ten days after the initial protests the army moved in with tanks and machine guns.

The government put the civilian death toll at 193 but eventually agreed to compensate the relatives of 288 victims. In addition 23 soldiers died, most of them killed by other troops but some by protesters.

Chung Soo-man, head of the Kwangju Massacre Bereaved Families Association, said people were still reporting relatives who went missing at the time. The association wants a special prosecutor appointed to discover what happened. — New York Times.

News in brief

Burma warns Suu Kyi against treason

THE BURMESE government suggested yesterday that the democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, was a traitor and said she and her pro-democracy colleagues would be "annihilated" if they tried to destabilise the country.

The state-run New Light of Myanmar and Mirror Daily newspapers, both mouthpieces of the ruling military, carried commentaries indirectly comparing Suu Kyi with Maung Ba Than, a 19th century traitor who helped British forces conquer Burma.

"True young patriots are well aware of all your activities and they will annihilate, holding hands with the people, anyone who makes the country unstable," the commentary said. "If you really have a true desire to see Myanmar (Burma) develop, it is essential not to do as you are directed by the imperialists."

More than 100 years ago Maung Ba Than helped British troops to capture Mandalay, then the Burmese capital, leading to the imposition of British colonial rule throughout Burma.

Suu Kyi, released from six years of house arrest in July, pulled her National League for Democracy out of a government-organised convention drawing up the guidelines for a constitution last week. — *Reuters, Rangoon.*

Tigers attack eastern base

SRI LANKAN Tamil Tiger rebels attacked a police commando base in the east of the country yesterday, hours after the army raised the national flag over the rebels' former northern stronghold of Jaffna, defence officials said.

"It's a fairly big attack," a senior defence official said. There had been earlier reports of an attack on a second camp as well, but an official military spokesman could not confirm them. Military sources said rebels tried to drive a van loaded with explosives into a Special Task Force camp near Kalmunai in the Batticaloa district.

The van exploded, killing a police sentry. Heavy fighting broke out in which rebels suffered heavy casualties, the sources said.

The Tamil Tigers, who have not admitted the fall of their citadel, said they were continuing to fight. They did not say where.

The rebel Voice of Tigers radio announced a big recruitment drive yesterday and urged people to enlist to stop the army "before it is too late". — *Reuters, Colombo.*

Rabin's killer charged

ISRAELI prosecutors filed a charge of premeditated murder against the self-confessed assassin of Yitzhak Rabin yesterday as the country ended a 30-day mourning period for the murdered prime minister.

The justice ministry confirmed the charge against Yigal Amir, aged 26. Police said he and his alleged accomplice, his brother Hagai and friend Dror Adani — would be brought before a Tel Aviv district court tomorrow.

Israel Radio, quoting from the charges filed, said Yigal Amir was to be charged separately with premeditated murder while he, Hagai Amir and Adani would be charged jointly with conspiring to kill Rabin and to attack Arabs. — *Reuters, Jerusalem.*

UN call for dialogue

THE UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, visiting East Timor's capital Dili yesterday, called on the Indonesia-appointed government to step up dialogue with local people to help solve human rights problems.

The city was calm at the start of Jose Ayala Lasso's two-day visit, which coincides with the 20th anniversary of Indonesia's invasion of the former Portuguese colony on December 7. He held talks with the governor, Abilio Soares, police and military officials and members of parliament. — *Reuters, Dili.*

Uganda threatens Sudan

Uganda's president, Yoweri Museveni, threatened to launch commando raids into neighbouring Sudan yesterday unless the Islamic government in Khartoum stopped aiding Christian rebels fighting to overthrow him.

"We demand, as we have done before, that the Sudanese regime disband the bandits and expel them from Sudan," Mr Museveni said.

"If they do not do so... and if they again send criminals to kill villagers in northern Uganda or plant mines, we may be forced to launch commando raids into southern Sudan to deal with those bandits," the former guerrilla leader added. — *Reuters, Kampala.*

Ex-Nazi Priebke silent

THE ITALIAN military prosecutor who brought ex-Nazi Erich Priebke to Italy to face a war crimes trial said the former SS captain refused to answer questions yesterday.

"He didn't answer any of my questions," military prosecutor Antonio Intellese said after meeting the 62-year-old German at the Rome military prison where he is being held.

Priebke, who had lived openly in Argentina since 1948, was extradited to Italy on November 21 to face charges that he was a chief planner of the massacre of 335 Italian men and boys at the Ardeatine Caves outside Rome in March 1944. He has admitted a role in Italy's worst wartime atrocity, but says he was following orders. — *Reuters, Rome.*



Dream ticket... A Chinese man sleeps on his feet while queuing to buy a ticket at Beijing's overcrowded railway station yesterday. Passengers are often forced to wait in line for hours. PHOTOGRAPH: GREG BAKER

Ex-minister hits back

PRESIDENT Violeta Chamorro's son-in-law broke a long silence since resigning as Nicaragua's most powerful government minister and attacked opponents seeking to block his run for president.

Antonio Lacayo resigned as minister of the presidency three months ago to run for president even though the recently reformed constitution bans relatives of the president from seeking the top office.

"The people have discovered that the [constitutional] reforms were made simply... to screw Antonio Lacayo," Mr Lacayo told a news conference at the office of his pro-government political party, the National Project. — *Reuters, Managua.*

Tax returns

A former tax inspector, aged 101, posthumously joined the ranks of the world's greatest investors this week when it emerged that she had bequeathed \$22 million (£13.7 million) to a New York university.

Anne Scheiber invested her \$5,000 retirement nest egg in shares and bonds in 1944, turning it into a fortune through a series of inspired stock market investments. She lived frugally, rarely leaving her rent-controlled, one-bedroom flat.

"She denied herself anything that a normal person would enjoy," said her lawyer, Ben Clark. "She never went to restaurants, never went to the theatre, didn't even take public transportation." — *Jan Katz, New York.*

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Horse virus kills humans

Philip Shenson in Brisbane

THE Australian jockey Troy Rail was born to race. His father, Vic Rail, was a renowned horse trainer along Australia's sun-soaked Gold Coast, where thoroughbred-racing is a sporting obsession second only to football.

Yet neither father nor son could understand why the horses in the family stables outside Brisbane were beginning to die.

"They wouldn't eat," Troy Rail, aged 34, said. "And then they really began to suffer. First they'd get a twitch. Then they began to shake, bashing themselves into the wall."

Within days, 14 horses had died, their lungs filling with blood and other fluid till they drowned. And whatever killed the horses was beginning to kill Vic Rail. The trainer, aged 49, died a week after he entered hospital in September 1994, his lungs dissolving.

Only a few months before scientists grappled with an outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus in Zaire last spring, Australian scientists were scrambling to solve a viral mystery of their own.

It has turned out to be among the most ominous medical mysteries in this country — a threat to human lives as well as the £1.5 billion horse racing industry. After a year-long investigation, scientists identified the killer: a cross-species virus related to measles.

But the threat may not have been contained. Investigators were startled in October when Mark Preston, aged 36, an Australian horse farmer in Mackay, about 475 miles

north-east of Brisbane, died. They say the virus may have lain dormant in his body for several months.

"There is no sense of panic, but there is a sense of urgency about this," said Steve Bishop, a health ministry spokesman in Brisbane, the capital of Queensland.

The organism has been identified as a morbillivirus, the viral family that includes canine distemper and human measles. Equine morbillivirus is the first member of that virus family to afflict more than one species, or to be discovered in humans since measles 1,000 years ago.

Keith Murray, chief of the Australian Animal Health Laboratory, said investigators were testing small animals in Queensland to see whether the virus thrives in their bloodstreams but becomes deadly when transmitted to larger creatures.

Investigators say Preston may have been infected when he performed an autopsy on a horse last year. Rail apparently contracted the virus when he force-fed dying horses in his stables, pushing his hand down their throats.

Tests at the Rail farm showed the virus caused the cells lining lung blood vessels to clump together, creating holes in the vessel walls so that fluid leaked into the lungs.

The government declared an emergency last year, placing nearby stables under quarantine and halting racing around Brisbane. Later tests on humans and horses found no sign of the virus.

Then came Preston's death. Mr Bishop, the health ministry spokesman, said: "We're testing everybody." — *New York Times.*

صلى الله عليه وسلم



Pillars of defence... Nato's secretary-general, Javier Solana (left), talks to Warren Christopher and Malcolm Rifkind in Brussels PHOTOGRAPH: DUSAN VRANIC

French move frees alliance resources for WEU

European peace role for Nato

John Palmer in Brussels

AN AGREEMENT to let the Western European Union use Nato troops and equipment in its peace missions may rapidly follow France's decision to play a greater military role in the Atlantic alliance.

Disagreement between France and the United States on the terms under which the Europeans could use Nato's resources have apparently ruled out such a deal in the past.

The French foreign minister, Hervé de Charette, confirmed yesterday that after a boycott lasting almost 30 years France would rejoin Nato's military committee and would attend at least some meetings of alliance defence ministers.

He told a meeting of Nato foreign ministers in Brussels that the French decision was "an important initiative to facilitate the renovation process of the alliance and to develop the European pillar of defence".

"France announced this morning that it was coming back into the structures of the alliance," he declared.

Although France will not become a full member of Nato's integrated military command and will not be part of its nuclear planning group, the announcement was seen as a significant development in French strategic policy.

There is a growing conviction that Paris will eventually rejoin Nato's military command as the WEU develops its own military capacity, including both Nato troops and the multinational "Eurocorps" set up by France and Germany.

"The French decision is very welcome and very important," the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, said last night.

Mr Rifkind said he now expected an agreement setting up a system of Nato joint task forces and an agreement for their use by the WEU in purely European-run missions.

"An agreement on these issues may be a few weeks away but it could come even sooner," he added.

A few technical questions remain to be worked out, including the involvement of US facilities in Nato command headquarters which might be involved in WEU operations.

Karadzic may be forced out of office next week, says agency

THE Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic (right) may be forced to step down as "president" either before or after the signing of a peace accord next week, an independent Belgrade news agency reported yesterday.

Citing sources close to Bosnian Serb authorities, the Beta agency said Serbia had lost patience and wanted Mr Karadzic to resign before or immediately after the signing ceremony for the Dayton peace agreement in Paris on December 14.

The Serbian president, Slobodan Milosevic, patron of the separatist Serbs, agreed to the peace deal last month which bars Mr Karadzic and the Bosnian Serb army chief General Ratko Mladic — both indicted as war criminals — from holding public office.

Mr Karadzic has reversed his opposition to the peace deal in recent public comments and struck a conciliatory tone.

According to Beta, Mr Milosevic has exerted pressure on the "vice-president" of the Bosnian Serb republic, Nikola Koljevic, demanding that he launch a campaign against Mr Karadzic. Mr Koljevic, who has praised the accord, is considered loyal to Mr Milosevic and a possible successor to Mr Karadzic. — Reuters.



sure on the "vice-president" of the Bosnian Serb republic, Nikola Koljevic, demanding that he launch a campaign against Mr Karadzic. Mr Koljevic, who has praised the accord, is considered loyal to Mr Milosevic and a possible successor to Mr Karadzic. — Reuters.

Britain attacked for blocking EU reform

John Palmer in Brussels

A HIGH-LEVEL report preparing the ground for next year's Maastricht treaty review conference singled out Britain yesterday as the arch-opponent of changes that would further European Union integration in a range of areas.

The report, by a group consisting mainly of European affairs ministers, is to be presented to the EU summit in Madrid next week and calls on the review conference to expand majority voting by the EU Council of Ministers.

But it highlights Britain's opposition to changing the present system. "Many of us believe greater efficiency would be enhanced by more qualified majority voting in

the Council which... should become the general procedure in the enlarged community. One of us opposes extension [of majority voting] on principle," it says.

Britain denied it stood alone. David Davis, the Foreign Office minister who represented Britain in the "reflection group" which drew up the report, said there were other EU members who shared British reservations.

"I think you'll find when you look at the development of the negotiations next year that other countries are not quite so clear cut as they may appear to be at the moment," he said.

At a Brussels news conference he conceded, however, that on reducing national vetoes, bringing in more majority voting in the Council of Ministers and giving the

European Parliament new powers, Britain was in a 14-to-one minority.

Britain is almost completely isolated in objecting to proposals to transfer responsibility for immigration policy, asylum, and external frontier controls to a majority vote system that would involve the Commission, the Parliament and the European Court of Justice.

It has a few allies in resisting extensive majority voting in foreign and security policy and the integration of defence and the Western European Union into the EU itself.

Given the gulf separating Britain from the rest of the EU, most other governments are counting on a general election early in 1997 bringing a Labour government to office which will be ready to reform EU institutions.

Italy, which takes over the presidency of the EU in January, plans to open the inter-governmental conference to review Maastricht in Turin towards the end of March. Germany's chancellor, Helmut Kohl, has predicted it will not close until the late summer of 1997, well past the last date on which a British general election can be held, in May 1997.

Introducing the report at a press conference yesterday, the chairman of the reflection group, the Spanish diplomat Carlos Westendorp, said he hoped that Britain would prove more flexible in the future.

"The country in question has a long tradition of pragmatism and I believe when the government considers what has been done to ensure that the European Union can

operate effectively as more members join, it will see the importance of greater majority voting," he said.

"We were not expected to negotiate conclusions — this will be a matter for the IGC — but to set out a variety of options. I believe this clearly indicates the way forward," Mr Westendorp added.

Although there are still some issues dividing the other 14 EU governments, these are likely to be whittled down even before the IGC begins next March.

The group discussed the possibility of a humanitarian European "peace corps", the formal adoption of the European Convention on Human Rights, radical moves to greater openness in decision-making and whether to include a clearer treaty commitment to full employment.

Church comes unstuck in holy war over Polish state

Ex-communists' victories force a rethink, writes Matthew Brzezinski in Lichen

THE Mary of Our Saviour Sanctuary inspires awe in all who see it. Its gold-leaf trim and intricate ornamentation exude the power and beauty of God. It silently enjoins submission from the million pilgrims who go there each year. And it is not even finished yet.

Amid the soaring Gothic and neo-Baroque spires is a new addition to the celestial skyline of this tiny hamlet in rural Poland: construction cranes. Here, on the site where the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared in the 19th century, one of the biggest churches the world has ever seen is rising.

When completed, its nave will seat 7,000. Its dome and tower will dwarf Notre Dame in Paris. Its dimensions will be second only to St Peter's basilica in the Vatican.

Critics of the project speculate about how many hospitals could be built instead. They say it is an arrogant display of clerical wealth in a country impoverished by the transition from communism, a medieval symbol of an institution that has refused to change with the times.

Catholic voters last month sent Poland's Church that same message. They elected as president Aleksander Kwasniewski, a former communist whom the Church had virulently attacked.

The hierarchy's response fell just short of a declaration of holy war. "The choice was between Christian values and neo-paganism," roared Cardinal Jozef Glemp, the prior of the Jasna Gora monastery, Poland's holiest shrine, vowed its gates would be closed "to the people of the hammer and sickle, proponents of a civilisation of death, abortion and atheism".

Mr Kwasniewski's victory over the devout Lech Walesa, for whom priests campaigned from every pulpit, came as a blow to the moral authority clerics once held over this ultra-Catholic country.

During the struggle against communism, the Church acted as a rallying point for the opposition. Father Jerzy Popieluszko became a martyr when he was murdered by secret police agents in 1984.

The destruction of the communist edifice, however, denied the Church that role. But it sought to use its leverage with newly-elected politicians. Crucifixes replaced portraits of Marx in government offices. A strict anti-abortion law was passed. Sex education was replaced by compulsory religious instruction.

Catholic broadcasters were granted licences two years before private television and radio stations received

permission to go on air. In 1993, the deputy prime minister, Henryk Gorynski, told parliament: "I don't care if Poland becomes a capitalist state. I don't care if there is freedom of speech or democracy. It is not even important if Poland is rich or poor. All that counts is that Poland is a Catholic state."

The return to power of the former communists after parliamentary elections in late 1993 was partly an anti-clerical backlash by voters.

But the Church demanded that Catholic values be incorporated into a draft constitution. It condemned the drive for European Union membership, and pressured the left-dominated parliament to ratify a concordat with the Vatican, signed by the previous government, that granted the Church special privileges.

When the governing coalition refused this summer, the Church launched an all-out offensive against Mr Kwasniewski.

It showed the Church at its lowest. When Mr Kwasniewski's mother died, priests on the Church-affiliated Radio Maria said she had no right to burial in a Catholic cemetery because the Kwasniewski family had hidden Jewish origins. The assault backfired, particularly with young voters.

After suffering defeats in the last two elections, and seeing churches empty, the hierarchy has been forced into soul-searching. Last Friday's 280th Conference of the Episcopate was punctuated by Polish bishops wailing over their mistakes. They vowed a gentler Church would retreat from politics.

'Gates are closed to proponents of death, abortion and atheism'

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Catholic broadcasters were granted licences two years before private television and radio stations received

News in brief

Russian MP escapes blast

An explosion damaged the parliamentary office of a far-right member of the State Duma in central Moscow yesterday, setting a room on fire but causing no casualties.

Nikolai Lysenko, head of the National Republican Party whose emblem strongly resembles a Nazi swastika, escaped unhurt from the blast which occurred less than two weeks before elections to the Duma. — Reuters.

King's friend held

A close friend of King Juan Carlos, linked last month to accusations that a former financier had attempted to blackmail the monarchy, was remanded in custody in Barcelona yesterday. An arrest warrant was issued against Manuel Prado y Colón de Carvajal over a 1.5 billion peseta (£8 million) loan. — Reuters.

Fahd sees visitors

King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, aged 73, received ministers and members of his family yesterday in the Dubai hospital where he was admitted last week for what US officials said was a stroke. — Reuters.

Human rights tour

Two United Nations human rights experts, Abdelfattah Amor of Tunisia, and Abid Hussain, of India, have been invited to Iran in what will be the first such visit by UN investigators for four years, officials said. — Reuters.

Mafia round-up

Spanish and Italian police arrested 100 Mafia suspects yesterday in a joint sting operation against organised crime, a spokesman said in Madrid. Police said they detained one of the bosses of the Camorra "family". — Reuters.

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Making schools count

Labour's new approach could raise standards

LET'S start with what is wrong with Labour's education policy on standards: the sums. Tony Blair's assertion that Ofsted (school inspectors) had found 30 per cent of schools failing was mistaken. Six years ago school inspectors found 30 per cent of lessons unsatisfactory — a statistic which subsequent reports suggest has not changed. But that is different from 30 per cent of schools failing. Ofsted claims only two per cent fall into this category. Even so, the teaching unions should not protest too loudly. An inspectors' report on urban schools two years ago — selected to represent the education which 20 per cent of children receive — found a lack of clarity of purpose, inconsistent practice, and teachers' expectations still falling far below children's potential. Within the profession, large numbers acknowledge that teaching standards must be raised. Only last week head-teachers were complaining about falling reading standards of first year secondary school pupils. But when outsiders make the same criticisms, the profession closes ranks.

The new policy is being billed by the tabloids as a bid by Labour to trump the Tories on standards. If the two parties are to engage in a serious debate on raising standards then that is welcome news. No one on the left should feel ashamed of pushing for higher standards. Few reforms could do more to help the poor and disadvantaged in our society. Messrs Blair and Blunkett are right to emphasise this point. Moreover, the "more you learn, the more you earn" principle is, as they assert, "as true for a nation as it is for an individual".

There are good reasons why teachers should embrace yesterday's package. It is based on the principle that schools count. Labour is right to emphasise the crucial role that teachers play — and right to embrace a general teaching

council which would be independent of the Department as well as the unions. It would be a first step towards restoring teaching to a profession to which even the best graduates want to turn. For all the challenges that teachers face — television, graduate parents, declining pay — continental countries demonstrate that they can still be esteemed. But it will need higher entry qualification levels — and higher pay.

True to a succession of research findings, Labour is pinning much of its efforts on headteachers. There will be a new national qualification for heads and more rigorous appraisal of their performance. At the final crunch, failing schools may be reopened with a new head and by implication some new teachers. Schools and local education authorities will be expected to set achievement targets. Salford schools will not be expected to compete with Manchester Grammar but will be expected to improve year on year. There will be less mixed ability teaching, more home work, and a clearer perception of minimum standards.

Much of the policy still needs filling out. Aspiration awaits application. Many caveats will only be resolved by implementation. Sensibly Labour is not waiting for office but urging local councils to test out its ideas in pilot programmes: baseline assessment of five-year-olds; home-school contracts; clearer strategies for failing schools. Other elements are already operating: 50 per cent of primary schools already set 30 minutes of homework a night for seven to 11-year-olds. It is time the other half did. In a television age it may be the only reading children do at home. Most important of all is the general thrust: Schools require support and pressure. Labour in the past gave the first but not the second; Tories the second but not the first. Both are needed in ample proportions.

Has Israel learned a lesson?

A month after Rabin's death the future is very uncertain

HAS THE DAWN of peace broken in Israel — and will no one be able to extinguish it? We all want to believe that Shimon Peres, speaking yesterday at the end of the month's mourning period for Yitzhak Rabin, asserts a new reality. The right-wing has been chastened and religious leaders are examining more carefully the implications of their words. There is a youthful mobilisation for peace, not only among the 1,500 teenagers who joined the Labour's youth movement within days of the assassination. Young supporters of rightwing and religious movements also filed past Mr Rabin's coffin. Hate-filled bumper stickers have been removed from thousands of cars. Opinion polls show Mr Peres to be twice as popular as the Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu whom many of his own colleagues now regard as a liability. For all his protestations of a media witch-hunt, Mr Netanyahu cannot deny that earlier this year he marched in front of a coffin labelled "Rabin is killing Zionism" and spoke to a rally where signs were waved showing Mr Rabin in the uniform of an SS officer. Mr Netanyahu's flirtation with the far right may cost the party dear in next year's election — unless it can dump him first.

Yet thoughtful Israelis are being driven to conclude that though a large majority has swung behind the peace process and is well aware of the dangers of loose rhetoric, the assassination may have widened rather than narrowed the division with the extreme

right. Shattering the illusion of unity does not mean that it can be transformed readily into reality. The authoritative Jerusalem Report notes that many rabbis who had challenged the legitimacy of the Rabin government are not yet ready to "step back from the abyss". The assassination has sharpened the key question confronting Israel's divided people: which do they value more, their democracy or the myth of Greater Israel? But the final answer has yet to be delivered. The effect of the assassination may be less of a deterrent than was thought. The spectacle of Jew killing Jew was traumatic. But once the taboo has been broken, other obsessed individuals on the fringes of the extreme right may be less inhibited from violating it again.

Security experts now say that very few of those who shared Yigal Amir's muddled messianism would be willing to kill — but who would have thought till a month ago that any such possibility existed in Israeli society? A few hundreds, even a few tens of such people, are far too many for safety. Whatever the truth behind Mr Amir's alleged security links, the bungling performance of Shin Bet means that safety can no longer be so readily assumed. Yesterday Israel's biggest newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth asked whether anything has really changed as the memory fades of the silence and the candles in the square. That may be too gloomy a judgment, but Mr Peres faces a long and possibly dangerous road ahead.

Gross Distorted Product

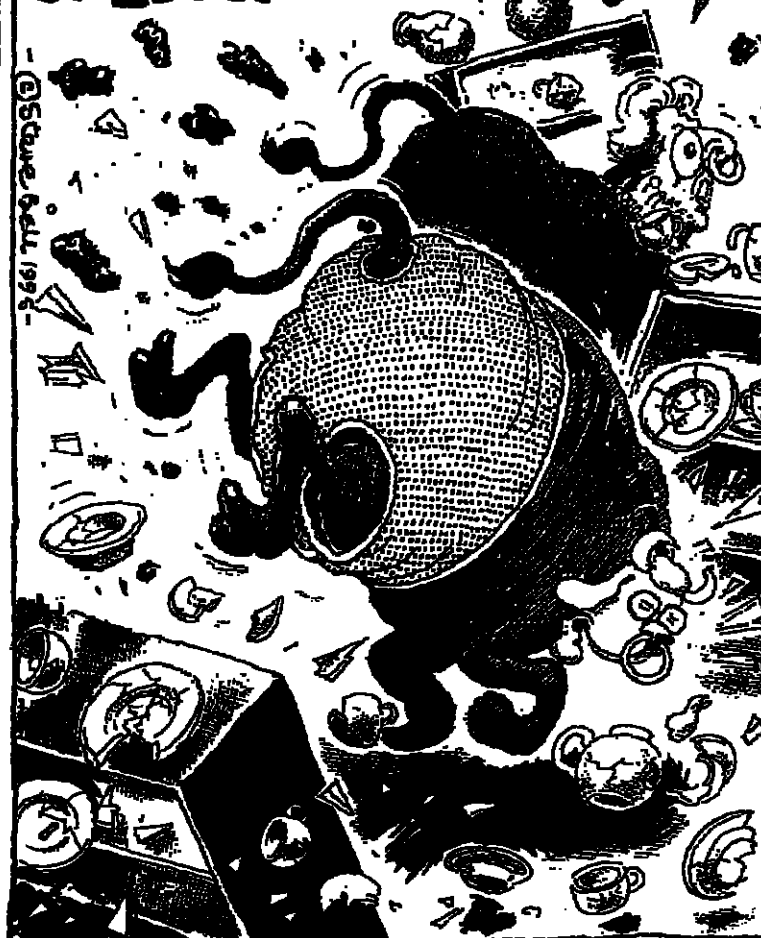
Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fastest growing of all?

WHICH is the fastest growing economy in Europe? Ministers, including the Chancellor, regularly say that it is Britain. Michael Heseltine was more circumspect yesterday when he told Parliament that Britain was among the fastest growing in Europe though he added that the UK had been the fastest growing in the G7 group of countries for several years — a proposition which might surprise Canada which grew by 4.6 per cent last year and which is growing faster than Britain this year. As for Europe — according to the latest figures compiled by The Economist — there are at least eight countries in Europe whose Gross Domestic Product so far this year is growing faster than that of the UK. They are Sweden (4.8 per cent), Spain (3.2 per cent), Italy (2.9 per cent), Holland (2.3 per cent), Germany (2.2 per cent), Denmark (2.6 per cent), Belgium (2.7 per cent) and Austria (2.5 per cent). Ireland, Norway and

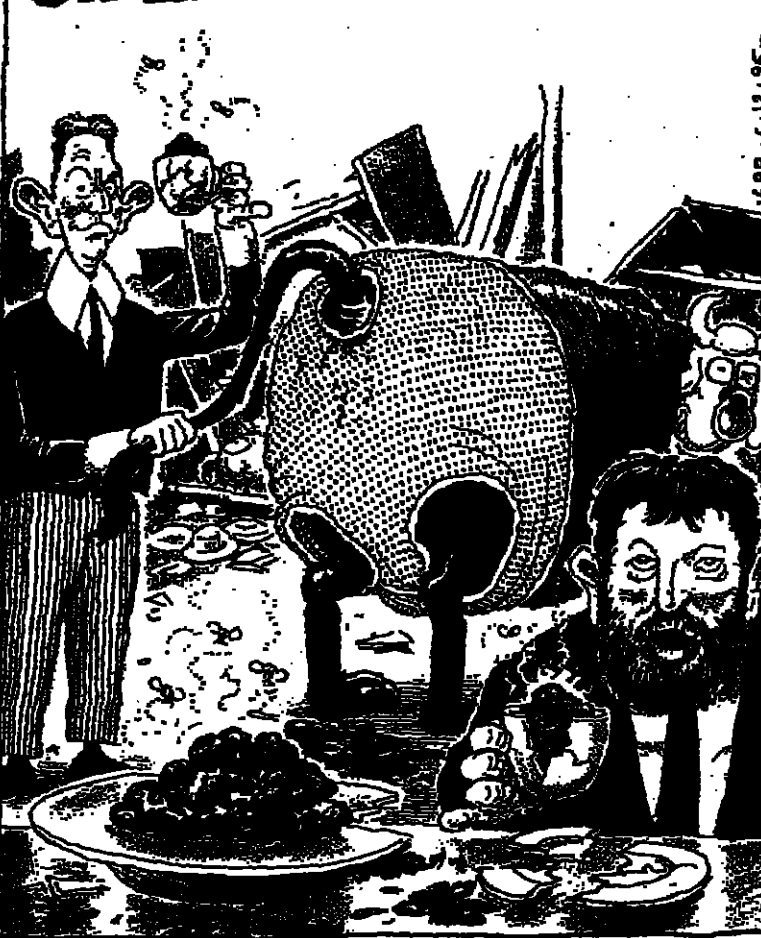
Iceland and Finland (not included in the Economist's figures) are forecast by the OECD to grow faster than the UK — making 12 countries ahead of us. France is exactly level with Britain (at 2.1 per cent). From this you might think that Britain was among the slowest growing economies in Europe this year: we couldn't possibly comment.

But the accolade for the fastest growing goes to none of these countries. If one excludes Turkey (whose 13.9 per cent growth is being compared with a sharp contraction last year) then the prize goes to Poland. The land of shock therapy grew by 5.2 per cent in the year to the last quarter of 1994 (the latest available) but is forecast to grow even more strongly when reliable figures for this year are known. Poland, of course, started from a very low base and so has plenty to recover from. So too has the British government's interpretation of its own statistics

CONSERVATIVE POLICY ON EDUCATION



LABOUR POLICY ON EDUCATION



Letters to the Editor

The law, in no particular order

THE Home Secretary ought to resign following the deliberate leakage by Conservative Central Office of confidential Home Office information, to which they should have no access (Tories caught in race smear, December 5). If he does not, it will be because neither Mr Howard nor the Prime Minister can any longer differentiate between government and party.

Jan J Day
 106 Kingsley Road,
 Harrogate HG1 4RB.

[NOTE that Sir Thomas Bingham, Master of the Rolls, has upheld a decision on the right of private-car-park owners to wheelclamp cars parked without authorisation. He's quoted as saying the ruling was based on the principle of "no wrong is done to one who consents" (the contention being that if you park in a restricted area you are consenting possibly to being clamped). Would Sir Thomas kindly explain why this very sound principle was not deemed to apply in the Operation Spanner case, where consenting men and women who practised sadomasochism were deemed under the law to have wronged one another?]

J Aitken
 Little Heath, Hertfordshire.

WE would like to point out to Natasha Walter (Playing happy families on the streets, November 30) that the new asylum legislation will not lead to claimants begging on our streets. That would be a luxury: refugees and asylum-seekers caught begging would face immediate deportation — which is what, in fact, is a death sentence.

K Pilling
 V Brady
 J MacFadyen
 32 New Northbridge House,
 Charlotte Street,
 Hull HU1 3HE.

NOW that markets are supposedly global, can we assume that British workers will be allowed to support their French counterparts? Samantha Whittaker
 23 Brook Street, Twyford,
 Berkshire RG10 9NX.

DAVID Blunkett insists that he is not resigning to support the Labour government's proposals amount to a "crusade". He is resigned to their being immensely expensive, inordinately cruel and ultimately doomed to failure? Or has he not studied history?

Roxy Purcell
 18 Bourne Road,
 Chelmsford, Essex CM2 0UE.

MARK Lawson's comments (Commentary, December 4) on the hazards posed by wee-small-hours visitors to hospital wards reminded me of a story told to me earlier this year by a night nurse at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital. An anorexic teenager being treated for her illness in a ward near the cardiac unit often visited the staff at night, chatting, borrowing magazines, sometimes taking hot drinks to weekend patients. Unfortunately this well-intentioned practice had to be curtailed after several patients became distressed, upon opening their eyes, to behold this sad, emaciated 54-stone wreath drifting between the beds. Naturally enough, they believed they had died and gone to who knows where?

Eve Potter
 Newbridge Hill Cottages,
 Newton St Cyres,
 Exeter, Devon EX5 5AF.

University challenge

HIDDEN away in the small print of the Budget was a massive cut of at least £300 million in recurrent and capital funding to universities, and an extended government freeze on the number of fully funded students. This represents a 7 per cent cut in the higher-education budget for next year.

Universities throughout the UK were already experienced in the extraction of blood from stones. They are still coping with a 14 per cent cut in the three years ending 1996-97. This further double blow will be unsustainable in some institutions where, at best, whole departments are likely to close and many staff will be made redundant.

Clues as to how cuts on this scale are to be achieved can be found in the latest circular from the Universities and Colleges Employers' Association (UCEA) to university vice-chancellors and principals. The UCEA proposes the division of academic and other professional staff ("academic-related" staff), and the reduction of national bargaining to a single percentage increase on pay scales could be negoti-

ated. This leaves little to negotiate and suggests more imposed pay "settlements" are on the way.

Sandi Golbey
 Association of University Teachers National Executive,
 University Park,
 Nottingham
 NG7 2RD.

PROFESSOR Gareth Roberts' proposal (Letters, December 2) to shift part of the cost of student tuition from the taxpayer to the earning graduate is unfair, socially divisive and will not solve the problem of funding higher education.

Professor Roberts and the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals have been asked by the Government to examine the problems of funding, but Professor Roberts' suggestion is merely in keeping with the Government's policy of transferring the cost of the public services on to the immediate users. Education draws upon the accumulated and freely given knowledge and experience of the past and is utilised directly or indirectly by everyone. It has to rely on society



In league against bad sports

LIKE James Barrington, I have known many of the hunting fraternity (haughty heretic thrown to dogs, December 2). Unlike him, it has only served to confirm my belief that blood sports are wrong. Fox-hunting is cruel. Cruelty is bad. Ergo, no hunting with hounds. You can't be against hanging, Mr Barrington, but in favour of the electric chair and still be anti the death penalty. Until the League sorts itself out, it won't get another penny from me.

Jacqueline Warner
 New Road,
 Ham Common,
 Richmond, Surrey TW10 7TZ.

IT IS stretching credulity to believe that anyone on the hunting field is unaware of the terror of the hunted ani-

mal and its end, whether it comes by a dig-out with barbed wire or a "fairly quick" death from the hounds. Hunters may appear to be perfectly decent people, but there has to be a flaw in the character of anyone who willingly takes part in a killing game.

Beatrice Bradley
 Wotton Bassett,
 Wotton,
 Oxford OX5 5JW.

IT would seem that Jim Barrington's greatest sin is to describe some people who hunt as respectable. He is simply pointing out that there are decent people on both sides and some communication might be a good thing.

Phillip Moore
 The Old Dairy House,
 Trentham Park,
 Stoke on Trent.

On John Smith and the English

WHAT, apart from unshakeable faith in his own omnipotence, leads Hugo Young (Commentary, December 5) to believe that John Smith was "a man who scorned, perhaps detested, the English"? In my experience — with the benefit of a 20-year friendship which Hugo Young did not enjoy — John Smith rarely felt either emotion. He was certainly over-tolerant of newspaper pundits who felt they had the right casually to traduce dead politicians.

John's views on devolution were based on his rational judgment of what was best for the government of the United Kingdom — not the need to prove that he was an expert on every subject under the sun. Rt Hon Roy Hattersley MP,
 House of Commons,
 London SW1A 0AA.

know of no evidence that could possibly justify such a conclusion. John would give anyone a hard time if he thought it necessary in a good cause, but Scots were as much at risk as the English or indeed anyone else. I can bear witness to that. He was a man of generous spirit, never vindictive, and his commitment to social justice and good government encompassed every part of the UK.

HUGO Young is utterly, ludicrously wrong in his attack on John Smith as racistist progenitor of the Scottish reform plan. I am a non-political friend of John's from undergraduate days, and such passions were not part of that nature. Devolution, as a Christian and his legacy was not for him, nor is it for the rest of us Scots, a definition (as yet) of Anglophobia.

(Dr) Andrew Noble
 University of Strathclyde,
 Glasgow G1 1XH.

She has it easy

MANY words have been expended on the departure of Linda Kelsey from She magazine "suffering from stress" (She had it all but she lost it, December 2). I would remind readers that Nancy Spain and Joan Werner-Laurie, who edited and ran She in the 1950s, were hard-working, fun-loving, party-giving single parents who lived together and, by all accounts, shared a wonderfully fulfilling working and family life.

Nancy Spain was, in fact, the most famous woman journalist of her day and wrote novels and non-fiction books, as well as broadcasting extensively. Because these women had never heard of "juggling" they never considered what they did was difficult or stressful.

It seems to me that by focusing too extensively on the difficulties of combining work with family life, we intensify them. If, instead, we promoted it all as easy, it would then become easy.

Liz Hodgkinson
 11 Anpley Road,
 London W14 0BY.

Please include a full postal address, even on e-mailed letters, and a daytime telephone number.

A Country Diary

STOUR VALLEY: It was one of the last warm days of autumn, a grey, scudding, March-like morning. We tacked back and forth across the Stour, the great boundary between Essex and the ancient kingdom of East Anglia. Ever since a fellow carriage passenger unknowingly tapped the great painter on the knee and said "Look out of the window, Sir — this is Constable's country!" the valley has been seen as the motherlode of English landscape painting. But it has also been the home of poets, vast landowners, scandals, poverty and ancient burials. My old friend Ronald Blythe now lives on the Essex side after a lifetime in Suffolk and, like all great country writers, can tell stories of its history as if they were gossip fresh-minted that day. He shows me where Adrian Bell wrote Corduroy, and where John Nash and his Bloomsbury friends punted and picnicked. The Stour itself was navigable (corn downstream, coal up) until the end of the twenties, when

The Shores, disconsolate

IN RESPONSE to Jeremy Hanley's letter (December 1) which states that "the comments attributed to Susan Shore's family contrast oddly with the written thanks from the Shore family": this is a considered attempt by the Foreign Office to mislead the readers of the Guardian.

He used a letter we sent during the early days of our daughter's terrible ordeal wherein we stated that "we would be grateful for anything they could do to help us". He then used a letter from our daughter sent at the end of 1994 after she had been placed on suicide watch by the authorities as a result of being told that, instead of giving evidence in January, the trial was being continued for at least a further six months.

It was due to Susan's own insistence that she be allowed to go to trial in her own right that caused the change that allowed Susan to be released from jail. Susan's joy at being released from a maximum-security jail where she had been chained and shackled was such that she thanked everyone involved in the case — irrespective of whether they had actually had anything to do with her release.

This included the consular office. To hold this letter up as "proof" of the good work of the Foreign Office is pitiable.

Mr Hanley goes on to state that Susan knew that she could have had a consular visit at any time. We find this very strange as, if he would care to refer to our innumerable letters to the Foreign Office and, in particular, one dated June 20, 1994, we specifically asked for a visit due to the fact that Susan was alone in the United States and we were very concerned about her state of mind.

Unfortunately, this letter stimulated no response — as indeed was the case with many of our letters — all of which are available for Mr Hanley's perusal.

Mr Hanley says he does not want public confidence to be undermined by our comments, but the facts of this case are very disturbing and have been voiced by others in similar situations. If the minister truly cares about British confidence in the Foreign Office, then he should delve further into this and similar cases and gain a true understanding of where and how his department fails the very people he is supposed to represent.

Christopher and
 Carole Shore,
 Jacks Lane,
 Harefield, Middlesex.

June Fisher

A lesson for the union

JUNE Fisher, who was one of the best-known and probably one of the best loved figures in recent teacher union history, has died at the age of 66. She was head of Catford Girls' School in south London for more than 20 years until her early retirement in 1992, and served as an engaging and popular president of the National Union of Teachers in 1988-90. Her ebullient personality and recognisably school-mistress manner was a significant help to the union in regaining its image and some self-respect as a teaching organisation following several years in which that aspect of its character had been largely submerged in industrial disputes and confrontations with the Government. It was difficult for even the most cynical national newspaper to portray such a self-evidently teacherly, indeed motherly, figure as a militant hell-bent on revolution.

June Fisher triumphantly presided over what is invariably a fractious conference with notable aplomb and an eye which brooked no nonsense from the floor, while her passionate presidential speech won over delegates with its clear concern both for professional issues and for international peace.

She was born in Chatham, Kent, and educated at the local convent school — evacuated for the war to south Wales — before going up to

Bristol University to study history and take a postgraduate teaching course. After starting teaching in 1952, her career was entirely spent in inner London: first at Peckham School, where she spent 16 years, becoming head of the history department, then at Acland Burghley, where she was deputy head for three years before moving to Catford County School, a large girls' comprehensive, in 1971.

Perhaps surprisingly for those who knew her subsequently as a committed and mainstream Labour supporter, at university she had been chairman of the Conservative Club. However, that was before she met Sam Fisher, a pillar of the union and leading light of the Communist Party, who was to become her husband. Sam, whose own ambitions in the NUT were thwarted because of his political allegiance, later gave loyal support to his wife as she became in turn a senior figure in the union, first as president of the Inner London Teachers' Association, then as a national executive member from 1984 and president five years later.

When, in the late eighties, the NUT's hard-left element began to outflank those like Fisher who had before been regarded as dangerous radicals, June was a leading member of the broad left coalition of Labour-supporting moderates attempting to wrest control of the union back from



June Fisher ... helping the NUT to regain its image and self-respect

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK MARTIN

the militants. Her lack of malice meant that it was difficult even for opponents to dislike her.

It was said that she derived great pleasure in broadcasting news of the latest union meetings across the loud-speaker system rigged — when vandalism permitted — throughout Catford School.

But June Fisher was an educator before being a union activist and is remembered with devotion by former pupils as an inspirational

teacher and charismatic personality. She took special pride in the performance of the Catford School choir at the church service on the Sunday of her union conference.

Even then, however, she was fighting cancer. She moved into St Christopher's Hospice near her south London home last month, where she died. She is survived by two sons, Sam Fisher died three years ago.

I visited her in the hospice three weeks ago, to find her still keenly interested in the union and concerned that control of it should be won for the moderate mass of classroom teachers. "The union has got to ensure that the middle-ground people see a place for themselves in the future of the union."

Doug McAvoy, the NUT's general secretary, said: "June Fisher was a commanding presence in education. Her enthusiasm, charm and larger-than-life personality

endured her to friend and opponent alike.

"She was deeply committed to the union, to the education service and the children she taught. To June each child had talents and abilities to be developed and every child could succeed."

Stephen Bates

June Rosemary Fisher, teacher and trade unionist, born September 18, 1929; died November 30, 1995

Appreciation: Jimmy Jewel

I FIRST saw Jimmy Jewel (obituary, December 4) on stage at the Alexandra Gardens in Weymouth in the early fifties. He was — in life and in his variety act — a true clown: a comic alchemist and a serious melancholic.

He was a lonely man and, for a few years when his wife was dying and his children had left home, I suppose you could say he adopted me. I had persuaded Jimmy, on the basis of seeing him in a straight role in a TV play, that he should play the part of the old comedian in Trevor Griffiths's play *Comedians*. Stephen Dixon suggests in his obituary that at the dress rehearsal he was "threatening to walk out as the penny finally dropped about the nature of the play." This is not true; he was perfectly aware of the nature of the play — as the author and myself knew only too well, given that Jimmy withdrew from the production two days before we started rehearsals. It is a tribute to his professionalism, but more to his courage and tenacity, that he ceded to our persuasion and arrived at rehearsals on the Monday morning, embarking at the age of 62 on a new profession as a theatre actor.

His subsequent superb performances as Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman* for me at the Nottingham Playhouse, in the West End in *The Sunshine Boys*, and at the National Theatre in *You Can't Take It With You*,

demonstrated that his decision was not a capricious one. I spent many hours over many years listening to Jimmy's tales, as he tugged at yet another cigarette before he ground it under his heel. He had almost perfect recall, and I can still hear his dry, unaffected voice describing Dublin during the Civil War (apparently to his father at the age of 10), clog fights in barrels in Barnsley, a party where Al Jolson sang till five in the morning, coins thrown on stage at the Glasgow Empire, chorus girls in Blackpool, boxing in Accrington, theatres, managers, the money, and a long litany of the outlandish villainies of his TV partner Hylda Baker.

Jimmy could be mawkish, sentimental, irascible and intolerant, but he could also be droll, generous, loyal and, in his diffident way, loving. In spite of a life which might have convinced him of the opposite, he always expected the best of people and was always shocked by the worst. He worshipped Sid Field, and must have told me 30 times what Val Parnell had said when he was told of Field's death at the Palladium. "Oh huh," said Parnell, "Uh huh. What's the understudy like?" Jimmy feared the same treatment; I hope that there is no one so callous, so ignorant, or so cold-hearted, as to remember him with such little affection and respect.

Richard Eyre

Another Day

December 6, 1942: Helen entertained to luncheon ten shooting guests, including Prince Radziwill who sat next to me. She thinks he is divine, but in reality he is a very ordinary man with a moustache and a developed and every child could succeed."

success of their children; whereas old men tended to remain competitive long after they could be of any use to the community. They would not resign themselves to being old men, but they were no longer qualified. Lytton Strachey was the first to point this out to Eddy. I think it is true. Men are naturally jealous of other men, and they are naturally young men. *James Lees-Milne, Ancestral Voices, Faber, 1975.*

Bryan Johnson

Hits with a collar and tie

BRYAN JOHNSON, who has died aged 69, was a veteran of the days when entrants in the Eurovision Song Contest wore collars and ties. The man who came second in the 1960 contest with Looking High, High, High went on the boards in the late 1980s with his one-man show playing the part of Oscar Wilde, and had earlier played the Fool to Sir Donald Wolfit's King Lear.

Perhaps his greatest achievement was to survive in popular music despite, rather than because of, the fame of close relatives. While Looking High was a million-selling chart topper, his brother Teddy and wife Pearl Carr were just about the most popular British singers on radio.

Bryan Johnson had always been noted for his voice — "That's my trouble," he said once, "no one ever remembers my face" — since the days when he sang in the Westminster Abbey choir and later won a scholarship to the London Academy of Dramatic Art.

His success came in making the decision to leave pop and concentrate on theatre. The parts he would recall most proudly were Rochester in a touring version of *Jane Eyre* and the vicar in *Murder at The Vicarage*. Being with Wolfit had plainly rubbed off on him, for Johnson had his own production of *A Christmas Carol* and allowed himself the privilege of playing Scrooge. It was a just reward for surviving the inevitable upstaging he experienced working for Wolfit.

Michael Freedland

Bryan Johnson, singer and actor, born July 18, 1926; died October 18, 1995



Wisecracks ... Bing Crosby and Bob Hope in Road To Rio

Gwen Swire

Inspiring a campaigner

WHEN Gwen Swire was 16 she had a defining experience, six months in a tuberculosis hospital. A proud northerner, her Methodist socialist family had grounded her social conscience. She was shocked by the uncertainty and poverty of the other patients, women mainly from Bradford. Gwen

helped them to learn about their health needs — and how to stand up for themselves.

Gwen, who has died aged 61, had begun her lifelong campaign. She worked in hospitals, and social services management. She was involved in national social policy and the health advisory service. She chaired

the British Association of Social Workers and was chair of Oldham Community Health Council when she died.

Gwen studied at Liverpool University, and qualified with the Institute of Medical Social Work. She was soon creating waves in the hospital social work department in In-

verness, and later returned to Lancashire, where she was eventually appointed Oldham's assistant director, and then deputy and acting director of social services.

Gwen was passed over for the top post in 1980. Councillors were bitterly divided over the appointment, and she went to an industrial tribunal, and lost. Deeply hurt, she was never one to waste time with recrimination, took early retirement and immersed herself in local and national projects, including Age Concern and the Multiple Sclerosis Society. She was a key

contributor to a network of senior women managers in the north-west.

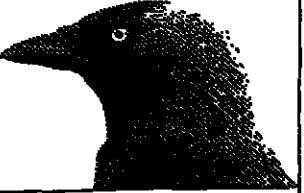
Gwen's day started early but she rarely took work home. She was a voracious reader and a recent convert to opera. She loved walking, especially in the Pennines around her windswept cottage, and created a garden at 1,500 feet, personally removing old cars, debris and rocks in the process. She shared these interests with Anne, also a social worker, her friend and companion for 30 years. Her grave lies up in the wild hills she loved.

Gwen Swire was an uncomfortable person to know, full of energy, driven by principle; even her close friends felt the edge of her idealism and impatience. She held strong views about social services management and women's undervalued contribution. An inspirational and supportive colleague, she prized efficiency but rejected 1990s business-speak.

David N Jones

Gwen Swire, social worker, born June 5, 1934; died November 19, 1995

Jackdaw



Golden globes

HIS TREMULOUS thumbs gathered the elastic waist of her panties and plucked them down over the twin golden domes of her behind and back up over the suspended sentences and Sobranie filter-tips of her stocking tops as, obligingly, she brought her knees up to her chest. She straightened her feet and the little stealth bomber of black lace and silk was his.

Quickly he threw off his own clothes and rolled on top of her. Detaching mind from over-eager promiscuity and its exquisitely appointed, shadowy task, he began to make love to her.

When they had finished they lay under the sheets and watched TV. The winner of this year's *Literary Review Bad Sex Prize*.

Still life

RHOPPER is a long lean friend of mine who began doing some illustrating a few years back and is still at it. I've been seeing quite a little of him lately. He is a voracious reader. Come through all the modern French productions, read a lot of Russian, a lot of German. Loves able dissection of the human species. Elites romance? Timid as an English school-boy himself. Long and lean — face great prominent masticating muscles, strong teeth, big mouth, full lipped but not sensual.

Cool about his painting. Blocks out things. Hardly any freedom in handling. Carries out his plan. Thinks of space. Takes little advantage of accident. Static pictures. Loves the romance of uniforms. The best man we had at school. A capable man still — but in the present condi-

tion not an artist. Not free enough for that. Too much Anglo-Saxon reserve. And he does not like it a bit. Loves the freedom of the Latins rather.

Should be married, but can't imagine to what kind of woman. The hunger of that man. He always makes me feel like tripping sentences together recklessly. But he's far from dull. Though he makes me feel like a papaver or a foolish butterfly — either or both. Such sincerity. But the hunger of him, the hunger of him! I'd like to see him out of his present condition. I'd like to see him happy. *Guy Fawcett's diary in November 1918 about his friend Edward Roper. Quoted in the New Republic.*

Progress halted

Alpenhorn networks. Pigeon post. Mongol Imperial post horse. Roman Imperial semaphore. The Tlaxcala and Taxis private mail system. Paris Commune balloon mail. Chinese Kite messages.

Soemmering's electrolytic bubble-letter telegraph. Pneumatic transfer tubes. Giovanni Caselli's facsimile pantograph. The Edison wax cylinder. The heliograph. The teleharmonium. Joseph Plateau's phenakistoscope. William George Horner's zoetrope. The stereopticon. Muybridge's zoogyroscope. Gaumont's Chronophone. Edison's kinetophone. The synchroscope. The moviephone. Phonofilm. The graphophone. Cinema. Cinema-Scope. Odorama. Pictel Vision. Polavision. Laservision. Skywriting. 78-rpm records. 8-track tapes. Coleovision. Intellivision. From the "master list of extinct forms of media" compiled by the Dead Media Project to

catalogue "the arcane, the off-beat, the forgotten. The failures, the lost and the buried, the media-mauit." *Launched last summer by science fiction writers Bruce Sterling and Richard Kadrey, the Project aims to "destroy the Whig version of technological history" in which "all technological developments have marched in progressive lock-step, from height to height, to produce the current exalted media landscape." Reprinted in Harper's.*

Smile please

FOR THE longest time Baudrillard's logic made absolutely no sense to me. Then one day in a hotel room in Chattanooga, Tennessee, after reading the chapter Requiem for the Media for about the 26th time, it clicked. Did it ever.

I was completely dumbfounded, but in a strangely pleasant sort of way. I was totally clear about why it was I was baffled and, additionally, quite comfortable with my confusion. An acceptable level of paradigmatic psychosis for a Generation X sociolo-

gist. At that moment I realised that I would never be able to return to the sociology I was trained to do because Baudrillard was right, the social had indeed vanished and culture had gone into a ballistic state of hyper-communication.

As a result traditional sociology had become quite besides the point. This is precisely the type of realization that a Ph.D. student in a staggeringly conservative graduate program needs to avoid at all costs ... It's possible that

the high rates of alcohol abuse among grad students is a function of this exact situation ...

Instead of following the rules of the game and writing a nice, safe paper on structural symbolic interactionism, I wrote a rambling, semi-coherent, and hostile paper titled "Americans Have No Identity. But They Do Have Wonderful Teeth" — the title of which was lifted from Baudrillard's *America ...* In a precocious graduate student move, I decided to submit "Americans Have No Identity" for possible presentation at the 1993 American Sociological Association meetings in Miami (which is itself a postmodern nightmare). Much to my surprise the paper was accepted for a scholar to scholar poster presentation and I began to consider how exactly to present my ideas about Baudrillard in a poster session.

The more I thought about it, the more ridiculous a traditional poster presentation on Baudrillard began to sound ... The obvious solu-

tion to my dilemma was to create a Baudrillard hologram just like one of the space princesses in Star Wars. Of course the monologue would have to change. In stead of saying "help us Obi Wan Kenobi, you're our only hope" it would say things like "speed is the triumph of effect over cause." "Fascination is the extreme intensity of the neutral" and "illusion is no longer possible because the real is no longer possible." It was a great idea. Unfortunately, my PC can't handle holograms.

Americans Have No Identity. But They Do Have Wonderful Teeth by Jonathan S Epstein, in the Panic Encyclopedia available on the Internet at <http://english-www.hss.cmu.edu/theory/poster-baudrillard.html>

Jackdaw wants your jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-713 4365; Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

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FinanceGuardian

Regulator admits mistake

Nicholas Bannister, Simon Beavis and Chris Barrie

THE water industry regulator admitted last night that he had imposed inadequate controls on one of the biggest utility mergers to have been given the go-ahead so far. He urged the £872 million takeover of South Wales Electricity by Welsh Water.

The surprise admission came as Ian Byatt, the director general of water services, issued a consultation document on the Welsh Water deal suggesting that, should the merger go ahead, the company should seek a separate listing for the power company.

Mr Byatt has made French group Lyonnaise des Eaux give a commitment to list Northumbrian Water as a separately quoted company by 2006 once its takeover goes through — to restore his ability to regulate effectively by comparing companies' performance.

But no such requirement was placed on North West Water in its £1.8 billion bid for Norweb — a deal which much more closely resembles the Welsh Water/Swallow takeover.

The Office of Water Services (Ofwat) last night admitted that it should have required North West Water to give a similar undertaking and justified its failure to do so on the grounds that it was on a "learning curve".

"If we had been thinking more clearly about the implications and needs of having a quoted company, we would have pushed for it then," a spokeswoman said.

Mr Byatt's aim was to force Trafalgar House to meet Stock Exchange financial reporting requirements, thereby ensuring he had adequate information to regulate the electricity business. And Trafalgar would have been forced to tread carefully over the way it treated profit and investment in the business.

But the concept of partial flotation was ridiculed by the power industry and rejected by Michael Heseltine who was the trade and industry secretary at the time.

The City took the view that the watchdog's ideas were leaked before Mr Heseltine's announcement in an effort to undermine the regulator's position.

One analyst noted that the Office of Fair Trading had put out in conjunction with his counterpart in the electricity industry, Professor Stephen Littlechild, City watchers expressed surprise at the listing demand and also noted that for the first time the regulators had raised questions about the ability of the water company's directors to manage both the water and power companies.

On the question of management, the paper says: "It is important that all issues within the combined business receive the attention of effective management."

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Notebook

Engineering group losing its charm



Edited by Alex Brummer

THE BTR trading statement is not a great advertisement for what some analysts have regarded as the best of Britain's industrial conglomerates.

Although profits for next year will come out ahead of 1994, weakness in Australian construction and North American and European motor components mean a severe downgrade, this, just as the City was becoming excited about the arrival of new chief executive, Ian Strachan.

The BTR boss will have to act with some deliberate speed if he is to avoid the fate of Hanson which has become so unfashionable with investors that its shares are yielding 8.2 per cent, making it the highest returning share among the FTSE companies.

Despite a 4 per cent fall in share value on the market yesterday, BTR is still some way off from that. However, the vision of Sir Owen Green of a low-tech worldwide engineering group able to produce ever-increasing returns is beginning to sour.

The acquisitions have become less exciting — the last being the purchase of the minority in Wylex in Australia which has stretched second half interest costs — and low-tech engineering is not quite as safe as it once was. It is interesting to note the success of Siebe, which has pursued a more technological strategy is starting to produce much admired returns.

It is widely assumed that the new management at BTR will mark its arrival by restructuring the business and disposing of its non-industrial portfolio. Maybe, however, it should consider going further and joining the global demerger sweepstakes.

Water quotes
It's good to see public officials prepared to admit they have made a mistake. But the water and electricity regulators have done their reputations no good by belatedly discovering they can ill afford the loss of a quoted utility. Until now the authorities have allowed market forces to restructure the industry.

However, Ian Byatt, the water regulator, has now woken up to the advantages of having as many quoted water companies as possible when France's Lyonnaise des Eaux bids for Northumbrian Water. He managed to extract a promise from the French group that it would float all its water interests by 2005.

But North West Water's takeover of Norweb, an exact parallel of Welsh Water's bid for South Wales Electricity, was allowed to go ahead without any such assurances. Somewhat late in the day the regulators have decided that

they do not want that to happen again. They are now in a no-win situation. Welsh Water would have good cause to feel aggrieved if it has to promise to float off its regulated businesses when North West is allowed to remain both.

But the regulators cannot afford to let Welsh Water retain the businesses of *infirmitas* now they have admitted they need the information which only separately quoted companies can provide.

Perhaps the only way out will be to allow Welsh Water to retain effective control of the businesses by floating the minimum 25 per cent needed for a stock market listing. It looks like being another botched and messy business.

Sales alert

IT IS too early to say whether the new monitor of high-street sales just unveiled by the British Retail Consortium is just another excuse for special pleading or a valid contribution to our overview of the economy.

The BRC's immediate response to the data, showing a 3.2 per cent annual increase in retail sales last month, was to call for a cut in base rates to boost consumer confidence. This might suggest that this is a case of an interest group using statistics to support its own agenda.

There is hardly a shortage of performance indicators in this area. We already have the Government's retail survey published by the Central Statistical Office, the Chartered Institute of Purchasing Managers' index and the Confederation of British Industry's distributive trades survey. Is it really necessary to muddy the waters with an indicator which is in any case based on value not volume and which is not seasonally adjusted?

According to the economic advisers to the BRC, who include the London Business School's chief economist Dr Andrew Sentance, the new monitor adds value in the sense that it deals with retail sectors in more detail than other surveys. It also, they emphasise, tracks the CSO data. But that seems to be another reason to query its existence.

It does not do to be too dismissive, though, before the new monitor has had a chance to settle in. The sectoral breakdown will interest some City analysts and, if the indicator continues to accurately reflect one aspect of CSO data (the value-based, non-seasonally adjusted figure), then it could provide a useful early warning of the state of Britain's high streets.

Sound advice

THE Treasury is pursuing its customary sound approach to economic affairs by considering Kate Barker of the CBI and Bridget Rosewell of Business Strategies for its independent forecasting panel. It is an important breakthrough not just for women but for economics practised in the real world of business.

Royal Bank of Scotland wins ombudsman action

THE Royal Bank of Scotland has successfully challenged a decision by the Banking Ombudsman Scheme for the first time.

The bank took legal action after it questioned the ombudsman's decision that it must honour a cheque after it has been entered into the bank's computers by a member of staff.

In October 1993, James Sutherland presented cheques from his business account for over £17,000 which were paid into a joint account which he held at the same branch in Edinburgh.

Two hours later, the company in which he was a former director, J&A Sutherland & Co Ltd, went into receivership and the bank refused to proceed with the transaction.

Scottish Court of Session judge Lord Penton ruled that although the cheque had been entered into the bank's computers, the bank had not yet decided to proceed with the transaction.

The Banking Ombudsman's office could not comment on the case last night, but it will

MPs attack policy on purchasing

David Fairhall

THE Government's defence procurement policy was attacked yesterday as MPs warned that reliance on competition and market forces in deciding arms contracts could endanger the defence industrial base and place hundreds of thousands of jobs in jeopardy.

Getting short-term value for money should not be the only criterion, the MPs argue. With 425,000 industrial jobs at stake, the Ministry of Defence must take more active responsibility for investing in key technologies, supporting the industrial base and promoting European collaboration.

The warning came yesterday in an unprecedented combined report from the Commons select committees on defence, trade and industry. But there were already signs that MPs were preaching to the converted.

In a consultation paper last week, the MoD let it be known that while "value for money must remain the cornerstone of our policy and competition is critical to achieving this", it now intends to give more weight to industrial factors. It promises to look carefully at the balance between buying cheap off-the-shelf and funding national development. It also accepts the need to promote European collaboration more vigorously, but will press partners to use prime contractors rather than the complex agency arrangements created, for example, for the three-nation Tornado aircraft programme.

Expenditure on defence research and development in the UK is currently 14 per cent of gross sales, compared with 2.2 per cent across manufacturing industry as a whole. But it has been falling sharply, as has the Government's contribution, which was cut by a quarter between 1985 and 1992. Over the same period, the French government put 36 per cent more into defence R&D, the German government increased its contribution by 24 per cent and the American government by 17 per cent.

The MPs sympathise with the Defence Manufacturers Association's call for more funding, at least in specific areas such as research into dual-use technologies which could also benefit the civil sector, and support for technology demonstrators.

The MoD favours multinational partnerships — created for commercial reasons, not by governments — which compete to give taxpayers value for money. The MPs want a more active approach, with the emphasis firmly on Europe.

"While we believe that nothing should be done to prevent UK firms from collaborating with US firms where this is mutually advantageous", their report says, "we regard greater European collaboration as crucial to the survival of the defence industries of the UK and other European countries."

And they warn against being frozen out of the European armaments agency being created by France and Germany.

"We consider it essential that the UK is a full participant in any such agency", the report says.

● *Aspects of Defence Procurement and Industrial Policy, HMSO £11.*

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In the frame... Wise Women Kate Barker (left) and Bridget Rosewell are on the shortlist for advisers to the Treasury

Wise Women set to win recognition

Sarah Hyle

TWO of the Guardian's Wise Women economic forecasters are set to join the influential panel of independent advisers to the Treasury, which has so far consisted only of men.

Kate Barker, chief economist at the Confederation of British Industry, and Bridget Rosewell, co-founder of the economic consultancy group Business Strategies Limited (BSL), are known to be on a confidential list which the Chancellor is considering.

The two women are said to be "in the frame" and on the shortlist drawn up by Treasury officials. At least

three names will be selected to replace the panel members who stood down after the pre-Budget forecast last month.

An official announcement is due before Christmas. The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, is expected to review the balance of experience on the panel, which earned the nickname "the Wise Men" when set up by Chancellor Norman Lamont in 1992.

The Guardian established the Wise Women in May 1993, to put forward another option and counter the male domination of the Treasury's panel. Since then the seven women have produced three reports each year. They have fo-

cus on issues including pensions, competitiveness, training and taxation as well as providing forecasts for GDP growth and the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement.

Both Ms Barker, 38, and Ms Rosewell, in her early forties, would bring experience of industry to the Treasury panel.

Before joining the CBI, Ms Barker was chief European economist at Ford and Ms Rosewell was chief economist at the CBI before she set up BSL.

Both women said they had not heard from the Treasury, but Ms Rosewell

said: "I would be very proud to be asked to join the panel." Ms Barker said: "It is important that they get business represented."

They would join the remaining members of the Wise Men: Professor Tim Congdon of Lombard Street Research Ltd; Gwyn Davies of Goldman Sachs International Ltd; and Professor Patrick Minford of Liverpool University and Cardiff Business School.

The Chancellor is also understood to be seeking a political balance on the panel now that Professor Wynne Godley, of King's College, Cambridge, has left the Wise Men. Professor Godley's views were on the left of the spectrum.

Pension blow for part-timers as two-year claim limit fixed

Clare Dyer
Legal Correspondent

PART-TIME workers unlawfully denied access to employers' pension schemes suffered a blow yesterday when an industrial tribunal ruled that compensation claims can be backdated only two years.

Some 50,000 workers have filed claims after a ruling last year by the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg that employers who deny part-timers pension rights are guilty of sex discrimination, since most part-time workers are women.

The TUC and the Equal Opportunities Commission, which backed 10 test cases, had argued that claims should be backdated 15 years to a European Court judgment in 1976. But John MacMillan, chairman of the Birmingham tribunal, held that Britain's Equal Pay Act, which sets a two-year limit, applied instead.

In a 37-page ruling, he also struck out claims made more than six months after leaving the job, eliminating an estimated 80 per cent of claims.

The TUC said yesterday that an appeal has already been filed for next March. The case could be referred back to Luxembourg by the Employment Appeal Tribunal and could take years to reach a final resolution.

TUC secretary John Monks said: "Part-time workers will feel frustrated and angry by the tribunal decision."

Those who filed claims too late have a possible alternative route to redress through the Pensions Ombudsman. Casework director, Joe Robertson, said the Ombudsman would take up cases for part-timers who came to him within three years of the last date when they were excluded from the pension scheme.

"Those still at work but not in a pension scheme could claim pension benefits for the last three years, and those who left within the last three years could claim for the period they were at work in that time. Claimants would not receive a lump sum, but the pension benefits they would have had under the scheme, and would probably have to make up the employee's share of contributions."

Saatchi couple gain £15m after Megalmedia soars on relisting

Patrick Donovan
City Editor

MAURICE Saatchi must have been under terrible temptation last night to break the blitzkrieg diet which has whittled several stone off Britain's most famous advertising guru.

He and his wife, Josephine Hart, were ready to celebrate the success of Megalmedia, the multimedia company which

more than doubled its share value on the Stock Exchange's junior market yesterday.

While the tabloids were drooling over the Hampshires who picked up £10.6 million on the national lottery, Mr Saatchi made far greater gains — watching the couple's privately controlled 60 per cent holding rather than another £15 million.

Trading went into overdrive when Megalmedia was relisted on the Alternative Investment Market after new acquisitions and changed its name from Graduate Investments.

Graduate itself had been bought by Mr Saatchi's wife, Josephine, from the deputy prime minister, Michael Heseltine, in exchange for her minority stake in his Haymarket publishing company.

The shake-up represents a reverse takeover of the recruitment agency into the world of media.

Having been listed at 33p, shares closed at 83p. Who needs to fill in lottery tickets when you can trade on the AIM?

Kipper Williams

Attitudes towards those exposing office malpractice are changing fast here says Richard Norton-Taylor and could follow the American pattern that Mark Tran outlines below

BLOWING the whistle is still regarded as a very British concept. It connotes a picture of disloyal sneaks but there are signs that attitudes are changing.

On Monday, Kathleen Day Kock, the Chief of the Office of Special Counsel at the EEOC, the agency responsible for protecting federal employees who expose malpractice — addressed Public Concern at Work, a British charity which has dealt with requests for advice from potential whistleblowers since it was set up two years ago. She chided the British for "a much less developed right of speaking out".

Last month, representatives of the companies and employers' organisations joined unions and public bodies for a meeting in the Commons to discuss a Public Interest Disclosure Bill (a less provocative title than the original Whistle-blowing Protection Bill) supported by backbench MPs of all parties.

The European Commission is also encouraging whistle-blowers as part of its efforts to *clean up* on price-fixing cartels. Today Karel Van Miert, the competition commissioner, will unveil proposals encouraging companies to "blow the whistle" on each other's illegal behavior.

In this country, the Public Interest Disclosure Bill would give new rights to whistle-blowers. They would be able to claim compensation for loss of earnings and stress; obtain injunctions to halt the wrongdoing; and file a claim for unfair dismissal at an industrial tribunal even if they have been employed for less than two years.

The bill includes safeguards, which blowers would not be protected if they disclosed information in bad faith, they must have reasonable grounds for believing the information to be accurate, and they must not have disclosed the information previously.

The law, says, must also

have taken reasonable steps to raise the matter of concern with the company's directors, there would be such a mitigation if it was reasonable to assume such steps would be ineffective — the Maxwell and BCCI affairs might be considered on this category.

It is also possible that the Alpha oil platform, which exploded in 1988 with the loss of 17 lives, found that "workers did not want to put their continued employment in jeopardy through raising a safety issue which might embarrass management".

The Guardian recently reported the case of Peter Smith, a sales manager with the Colonial Mutual insurance company made redundant in 1987. He had repeatedly attempted to persuade senior executives to act against alleged breaches of regulations. He has issued a High Court writ for damages against the company.

The need for whistleblowers' protection is now recognised

by public bodies, including the Nolan Committee, the Audit Commission, and the ERM Executive, as well as by unions.

Dr Tony Wright, the Labour MP and chief sponsor of the bill, says that companies have come to believe in protecting both the rights of the shareholders and the incoming up routes within companies to enable fraud and corruption to be discovered."

Eso and NatWest have established Whitefielder hotlines. Thomas Edw. Barclays Bank, NatWest, NatWest, TSB, Cadbury Schweppes, BT, and Forte, have said they support the bill's principles.

Guy Dehn, director of Public Concern at Work, is convinced that "the climate has changed in the last two years". People at the top of companies, he says, would much rather know what was going on for pragmatic reasons - malpractice is a bad thing for a company to defend the corruption.

LAWSUITS involving whistleblowers in the US have become more frequent in the 1990s as employees grow more confident of winning protection against their bosses after disclosure of illegal practices.

Lucas Industries earlier this year was fined \$18.5 million (\$12 million) by the US Government for supplying false information on aircraft gearboxes.

Dowty Woodville, a US subsidiary of the UK engineering firm TL, is being accused of systematically overcharging the US government for parts used in the F-111 strike jet and the B1-B bomber.

Jeffrey Thistlethwaite, former business manager at Dowty Woodville, claims he was relieved of responsibility for the parts after suggesting to Dowty executives that the cost figures were too high.

Under the US Whistleblower Protection Act, Mr Thistlethwaite, a Briton, could receive up to \$10 million as a reward for reporting the alleged conspiracy.

Douglas Keeth, a former financial officer for United Technologies in Los Angeles, won \$22.5 million last year after exposing the company's fraudulent billing to the Pentagon for helicopters.

Such high profile cases

have prompted some concern that blowing the whistle has become too profitable. The opportunity to make millions, the argument goes, damages the credibility of the individual, especially if he or she is a primary witness to the alleged illegal activity. In reality, winning a windfall is extremely difficult.

Not to mention the mental turmoil that whistleblowers feel when they take on the company. That was clearly the case with Mark Whitacre, a high level executive with Archer Daniels Midland, a big agribusiness company.

He acted as a mole for the Department of Justice, and

the FBI after he passed on information of alleged price fixing at ADM and other agribusiness companies. ADM is now the subject of a major criminal antitrust investigation.

But Mr Whitacre's life has turned into a nightmare since his role in the ADM investigation became public. ADM fired the executive and accused him of stealing \$2.5 million from the company. In early August, after the embezzlement charges were publicized, he tried to commit suicide.

The most commonly used federal whistleblower law is the False Claims Act. Originally drafted in 1863

to uncover fraud in the Union Army during the Civil War. It was revised in 1986 to force companies to pay triple damages for false claims they make and to give the whistleblower a portion of the award.

Under the law, an individual may file a lawsuit on behalf of the US government against any person, company or agency making false claims against the government.

Employees cannot be fired, disciplined or harassed for disclosing illegal activities about the government agency or company. Those who are punished for their actions can sue for damages and reinstatement.



Ian King

THE Treasury recouped a significant chunk of last week's £3 billion tax hand-outs yesterday, when it raised £510 million from the sale of its remaining stake in BP.

The sale, handled by brokers SBC Warburg, is the first part of a "mop-up" privatisation which is expected to raise more than £1.5 billion over the next 18 months.

The sell-off, revealed in the Guardian three months ago, will cover the Government's remaining stakes around 60 companies, including Scottish Power, British Steel, British Airways and National Power. SBC Warburg, which

was appointed by NM Rothschild to handle the sale, made an instant profit of around 25 million itself, buying the block of 101 million shares from the Treasury at 508p a time, and selling the shares on at 513p each.

At least 100 million shares with British and European institutions, and the rest with American funds, BP shares closed 14p down at 517p.

SBC Warburg spokesman Michael Hammond denied the broker had agreed to sell any other stakes for the Treasury, but Matthew Westernman, of Rothschild, confirmed the Treasury was selling its stakes in privatised companies would be sold in due course. He said: "The Treasury has been looking since the early

Railtrack.....	100%
British Energy (Scottish Nuclear & Nuclear Electric).....	100%
Mersey Docks & Harbour Co.	14%
Scottish electricity Cos.....	3.5%
British Gas.....	3.3%
Northern Ireland Electricity ..	3.3%
BAA.....	2.9%
British Airways.....	2.5%
Water companies.....	1.6%
Other regional electricity Cos ..	1.5%
British Steel.....	0.05%

Treasury had decided to sell its BP stake yesterday after a recent strong showing by the group's shares.
 He added: "The Government would have a good supply of shares and there was an appetite for them - basically, the market for BP was right."
 Mr Westerman said the exact timing of any future sell-off ultimately lay with Michael Jack, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury.
 Shares of other privatised companies fell sharply on sell-off fears.
 BT, where the Treasury owns a 5.5 per cent stake, slid 8.2p to 488p, while BAA, where it still has a residual shareholding of 2.9 per cent, fell 5p to 488p.
 Meanwhile, the sale of the

Patrick Donovan
City Editor

EXPECTATIONS were growing last night that the German Otto mail order combine may become involved in a counterbid for the besieged Littlewoods retail combine.

City sources said the privately owned company — the world's biggest mail order operator and possessing a large British presence already — is watching the situation.

An Otto spokesman said yesterday that he "generally always considers interesting offers. But there is no special

interest regarding Littlewoods".

However the spokesman refused to comment on whether the company would be prepared to participate in a bid if the offer presented itself or if it had made overtures to Littlewoods.

City sources say that Otto, which has a turnover of £225 billion (£11.3 billion) and operations in 13 countries, would make an ideal fit with Littlewoods' mail-order shopping operation.

There is speculation that another City-backed consortium is preparing to pitch in for Littlewoods which is now

the subject of competing approaches from former Littlewoods chief executive, Barry Dale and a joint offer from N Brown and the Ice-cream Group. Mr Dale's merchant bank, Dawson Day yesterday wrote to the 32 family shareholders to ask them to consider his offer.

The letter said: "Bidco's proposal is supported by leading City institutions who have each studied a detailed plan to develop your group as a whole. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the plan in detail with you and your board."

A vote to consider his offer will be taken tomorrow.

BTR share price dives 14p after warning of profit shortfall

WORKFACE/The
TUC is turning the
screw on exploiters,
says Martyn Halsall

Midlands, a steel pipe specialist, told union safety experts he had been injured falling from ladders after his employer refused to erect scaffolding.

Workers paid £3 an hour for a 40-hour week counting cost-cutting measures. The industry firms were warned they would lose 10 per cent of pay if they failed to check 50 pence an hour, another worker said. The TUC is focusing on seasonal workers, frequently on the scrap and of bad pay and conditions.

Homeowners' rates are often pitiful, according to the TUC, which argues that the general picture has been made significantly worse by the Government's contribution to the Wages Councils, which set minimum rates in vulnerable industries.

John Moons, TUC general secretary, said yesterday: "Too many people are working for less than a living wage. Insecurity. The TUC is appealing to people to expose exploitation, and the silence and exposure bad bosses. Companies which persist in mistreating workers are exposing their own warped view of the 'iron trail'."

The unions' campaign highlights the dramatic loss of some formidable union power. Even where plants are still organised, some employers are threatening to use their muscle to cut wage bills when a renewed recession is feared.

Above all, TUC researchers report fear. A typical caller, after reporting the rock-bottom wages of his husband, would receive for Christmas holiday work, remarked: "I'm very worried about giving you this information, as I'm afraid to lose this job."

The TUC's hotline number, charged at local rates and open to union and non-union workers, is 0345-233 233.

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Soccer

Venables points to boys of summer

David Lacey

FOR Terry Venables, England's friendly against Portugal at Wembley on Tuesday marks the end of the beginning, then surely the squad he announced yesterday signifies the beginning of the end.

Not, of course, in the finite sense so far as Venables's security of tenure as England coach is concerned. That will rest, ultimately, on the success he achieves in the 1996 European Championship, although a further meeting with Graham Kelly, the FA's chief executive, will take place this month.

No, it is the beginning of the end to which Venables was appointed to succeed Graham Taylor nearly two years ago, namely to produce a national team capable once more of distinguishing itself in a major competition. As Euro '96 hosts, England will be expected to put up a reasonable show and it would take a highly plausible hard-luck story to excuse a failure to reach the semi-finals.

The significance of the squad for the Portugal game lies in its settled appearance. Allowing for injuries or drastic loss of form, and the probable return of Darren Anderton once he has fully recovered from his groin problems, Venables will be selecting his final squad for the European Championship from a list bearing a close resemblance to the 23 names announced yesterday.

For Euro '96, Venables will be allowed 20 players and a spare (a third-choice goalkeeper). This means that for a three-week, 16-nation tour-

ment England, like their rivals, will effectively choose their outfield men from a relatively slim pool of 18.

Venables would have liked to be able to cover every position with a squad of 22, plus the extra goalkeeper, but will now have to take the versatility of such players as Gary Neville, Gareth Southgate, David Platt, Robert Lee, Dennis Wise and Steve Stone into greater consideration.

With Nick Barmby always likely to be the latest England party is largely unchanged from the squad Venables picked for last month's match against Switzerland, when a 3-1 victory distinguished by the performance of Stone and the obvious rapport between Alan Shearer and Teddy Sheringham quelled the rising criticism after the barren game in Norway.

As a cast list for Euro '96, the squad is revealing for its absences as for those still present. Venables insisted yesterday that the door remained open for other players, such as Arsenal's Paul Marston, but implied that barring injuries those in possession would take considerable shifting.

Thus Paul Ince looks like remaining in the limbo he imposed on himself by withdrawing from the Umbro Cup, and even the eternal John Rudge now appears beyond recall. Gary Pallister is out for the moment with back trouble, giving Steve Howey another chance, but only a serious outbreak of elm disease among the centre-backs will see Steve Bould and Neil Ruddock back in favour. The midfield looks batty-proof.

The main speculation about the side Venables is due to announce on Monday will concern the likelihood of the in-form, goal-hungry Les Ferdinand being given a game, and how this might be done without denying Shearer a last chance this year to end his goalless international sequence, which has now lasted a season-and-a-half.

With a full Premiership programme this weekend, and a day less for players to recover from any injuries, Venables will be lucky if he avoids any withdrawals. Should everyone survive, the team could be: Seaman; G Neville, Adams, Howey, Le Saux; Stone, Lee, Gascoigne, Barmby; Sheringham, Shearer.

After Portugal, England will not play again until February. Possible opponents will only emerge once Venables has seen what the European Championship draw brings him on Sunday week.

A New Year get-together will be followed by warm-up games in February, March, April and May, and Venables then plans to play two matches abroad during the final run-in to Euro '96.

A Sunman striker David Kelly has ankle trouble and has withdrawn from the Republic of Ireland squad for the European Championship play-off against Holland at Anfield next Wednesday.

23-PLAYER SQUAD: Seaman (Arsenal), Platt (Aston Villa), Southgate (QPR), Stone (Nottingham F), Howey (Sheff Wed), Lee (Newcastle), Marston (Liverpool), Wise (Chelsea), Ruddock (Newcastle), Barmby (Middlesbrough), Sheringham (Tottenham), Shearer (Blackburn).



Brothers in arms... Eric Cantona (left) listens to his brother Joël at the premiere in Marseille of Le Bonheur Est Dans Le Pré PHOTOGRAPH BY BORIS HORVAT

Cameras catch Cantona in the act

Alex Duval Smith reports from Auch, where a few well-chosen words made a lasting impression on film and upon the locals

ERIC CANTONA may seem an unlikely hero in France's most devoted rugby union region, where "the Red Devils" is the nickname of the local XV and the most important sport is eating, *foie gras* and drinking armagnac.

"We do have a football team but it is somewhere in the third division," said David, barman of Le France café. Last summer, Cantona sat at his bar watching British football on Eurosport.

If Cantona makes more money this year out of personal appearances than playing for Manchester United, a new French film which was shot here and in which he features will have something to do with it.

Le Bonheur Est Dans Le Pré (Happiness Is In The Glade), which opens in France today, has already been sold to 13 countries, though not yet to Britain.

Directed by Science Chaillez, who made his name five years ago with the black comedy *Tatie Danielle*, it stars Michel Serrault and Carmen Maura. But the comedy's pre-release success has little to do with the presence of the veteran actor nor that of Pedro Almodóvar's favourite actress.

It is Cantona — who has half a dozen lines and is mentioned in tiny print on a promotional poster featuring a gaggle of geese — who has made all the difference. He has brought hopes of a tourist boom to the Gers département and football on to the television screen at Le France.

Since Cantona sat at his bar in June, David, the 25-year-old barman, has joined a football team. "Cantona is a hero here now. After the kung-fu incident, the autograph hunters were a little reticent but Cantona was very patient, specially with the children," he said.

But the film makers played on Cantona's roughish reputation and even wrote a Nike saleswoman into the script. What is more, they made him portray a rugby player.

The story centres on the escape to the countryside of a stressed lavatory manufacturer from eastern France (Serrault).

Cantona plays Lionel, a rough local lad who is married and has two children but has fallen in love with Fuce, the daughter of the lavatory manufacturer, and made her pregnant. Joël Cantona, Eric's brother who in real life plays for Olympique de Marseille, appears as Nono, an ambulance driver.

At Téliem, the film's distributor in France, a spokesman said the system was "very disappointing" of the interest in the Cantona brothers. "We are trying to keep their roles secret so that when they appear it is a surprise for the audience," she said.

But that does not stop the film's director from praising Cantona's acting talents in promotional blurbs for the film. "Eric stands in front of that camera like he is about to hit a penalty. His motivation is total and you can see him thinking, 'Shit, I've got to score'. He is a natural who is truthful like a character out of Pagnol," says Chaillez.

The comparison with a Pagnol character is accurate. In his half-dozen lines of dialogue, Cantona is unable to shake off his strong Marseillais accent even though he is playing a country lad from the south-west of France.

Cantona's venture into the cinema is not his first acting role. This year, apart from the British Nike advertisement, he has made a series of French television commercials for Bic razors. In the latest, all he wears is a pink shower-cap.

He is currently on most French bus stops, advertising a compilation compact disc to raise money for Aide Recherche. The caption reads: "It is more important to buy this record than to win the French league."

Like Cantona, Yves Guérin, a 48-year-old café manager in Eauze, west of Auch, got his first acting break in *Le Bonheur Est Dans Le Pré*. He has two lines more than the footballer.

Guérin said Cantona was great to work with. "He is a man of few words. In the film, I serve him a glass of white wine. Off the set he was very quiet, particularly when there were lots of fans around." Guérin did not hear Cantona mention sardines.

but added: "Sometimes it was hard to work out what he was saying. In the film he stuck rigidly to his lines, but off set he had a tendency to mumble."

Claude Bétaille, the assistant mayor of Auch, knows just why he loves Cantona. "The film is going to be great publicity for the town and the region. I was afraid it would caricature French country life but it treats a fine line and, on the whole, steers clear of stereotypes."

Georges, the 50-year-old barman at Auch's four-star Hotel de France, where the cast dined during filming in June and July, was proud to have met Cantona. "But you know," he said, "we get lots of stars here. They come to eat at the restaurant and sing at the opera festival. Fifteen years ago we had Steve McQueen here. Now there was a star for you."

Eric Cantona has been voted the most hated person in football in a poll among fanzine editors conducted by the soccer magazine *FourTwo*. Two other Manchester United personalities appear in the poll's top 10, the manager Alex Ferguson coming third and the midfielder Roy Keane seventh.

Wimbledon plans get lukewarm reception

Fifa put a brake on Dublin move

WIMBLEDON may face opposition from the world governing body Fifa to their plan for a bold move to Dublin.

The Premiership club's owner Sam Hammam is considering relocating Wimbledon but permission would be required from Fifa, the Football Association and the Football Association of Ireland.

A Fifa spokesman Keith Cooper confirmed: "Wimbledon couldn't go ahead with this until we gave our agreement. We have not given anything about it officially but on what we have learned through the media there would appear to be no compelling reasons of a humanitarian or security nature for the move. We would be concerned on grounds of precedent and continuity."

Fifa has been confronted with similar cases in the United States but nothing quite like Hammam's shock plan to uproot Wimbledon from their ground-share arrangement at Crystal Palace and switch Premiership fixtures across the Irish sea.

The Premier League and the FA have not been approached but Hammam claims support from several Irish businessmen and the rock band U2 for the move which could involve a new £70 million stadium home for Ireland's national team.

Members of a Manchester-based consortium met in Barcelona yesterday to discuss plans for a takeover of First Division Portsmouth. The six-man group, headed by a businessman, Warren Smith, met to finalise plans for their bid and will meet Portsmouth's chairman Martin Gregory for further negotiations later this week.

The group first made an offer for the club at the beginning of last month when their £400,000 bid was dismissed by Gregory, who described the consortium as "Mickey Mouse people".

But the two groups held a successful meeting last week and they are now hopeful that a deal can be agreed before Christmas.

Arsenal's Women's Premier League game against Liverpool has been chosen as England's contribution to the United Nations' 50th Anniversary celebrations on Saturday. All national associations have been invited to designate matches in each of the 24 time-zones to take a series of matches simultaneously around the globe.

The Football Association has chosen the repeat of last year's Women's Cup final, which Arsenal won 3-2, and the Londoners have agreed to allow Highbury to be used for the event.

Bolton make a move for Sellars

BOLTON WANDERERS yesterday strengthened their struggling Premiership squad when they completed the £750,000 signing of the Newcastle midfielder Scott Sellars.

Another midfield player, Plymouth's Wayne Burnett, completed a £100,000 move after two months on trial at Burnley Park.

The 20-year-old Sellars is expected to make his Premiership debut in Saturday's home match against Liverpool. He had been unable to regain a regular place at St James' Park after being sidelined for most of last season with a knee ligament injury which required surgery.

He is returning for a second spell in Lancashire after spending six seasons with Blackburn Rovers.

Birmingham City's manager Barry Fry has agreed a fee with Barcelona for the Danish international midfielder Ronni Ekelund, a day after announcing that the deal had collapsed.

Fry hopes to sort out personal details with the 23-year-old Ekelund tomorrow morning. Southampton had been expected to sign the player, whom they signed on loan last season.

Leicester's manager Mark McGhee failed to appear at a meeting at Filbert Street yesterday, increasing speculation that he is about to join Wolves.

Champions League: Group matches, final round

Big freeze may put paid to Rangers

RANGERS' final Champions League game against Borussia Dortmund tonight will be postponed if the weather and the Germans' failure to invest in undersoil heating.

Walter Smith's players trained in sub-zero temperatures on a rock hard pitch yesterday and, with more snow forecast overnight, a postponement seemed likely.

"It will depend on how much snow there is overnight. If the pitch is not playable then the match will be postponed," said UEFA's match overseer.

Blackburn go into their final Champions League match against Rosenborg at Ewood Park without eight first-team players.

Top of the missing list are Graeme Le Saux and David Batty, who are both banned. Celtic's three games on the cusp in Moscow last month. Colin Hendry is also suspended.

Blackburn, bottom of their group with just one point and one goal, also have their recent signings Lars Bohinen, Billy McKelvey, Graham Fen-

ton and Niklas Gudmundsson ineligible. "Despite our selection problems we will not be changing the system — we have enough wingers without doing that," said Ray Harford.

Blackburn's only European goal came in the defeat in Norway. "We haven't done as well as we would have hoped in Europe, but everyone at the club is a little bit wiser for the experience. You have to learn as you go along."

● Juventus were forced home from Romania yesterday after their charter aircraft to Bucharest, where they are due to play Steaua tonight, was diverted because of snow. The Italians will return today if the city's airport reopens. If not the game will be re-staged next Wednesday.

McKimmie escapes prosecution

STEWART MCKIMMIE, the Aberdeen captain and Scotland full-back, is off the hook.

Glasgow's Procurator Fiscal asked police for a report on the incident nine minutes into last Saturday's Premier Division match at Firhill in which McKimmie was sent off for allegedly elbowing Patrick Thistle's Callum Milne. But crown officials said yesterday that "the Procurator

Fiscal intends to take no further action".

McKimmie is suspended tonight, when Aberdeen meet Kilmarnock.

Everton are so confident that today's judicial review will suspend the remaining suspension on Duncan Ferguson that they have arranged a reserve game against Newcastle at Goodison for tomorrow night to give the big striker a badly needed run out.

Results

Tennis

GRAND SLAM CUP (Men): First Round (1st Set) 7-6, 2nd Set 6-4, 3rd Set 6-4. 1st Round (2nd Set) 6-4, 2nd Round (1st Set) 6-4, 2nd Round (2nd Set) 6-4.

Basketball

NBA: Boston 121, Miami 120 (OT). Denver 85, Detroit 82.

Cricket

FOURTH ONE-DAY INTERNATIONAL (Rugby): India Women 132-1, England Women 131-0. India Women won by nine wickets. Series stands 2-2.

American Football

NFL: Detroit 27, Chicago 7.

Ice Hockey

NHL: NY Rangers 5, Anaheim 1.

Snooker

GERMAN OPEN (Frankfurt): First Round (1st Set) 6-3, 2nd Set 6-3. 1st Round (2nd Set) 6-3, 2nd Round (1st Set) 6-3, 2nd Round (2nd Set) 6-3.

Fixtures

(7.30 unless stated)

Soccer: REPRESENTATIVE MATCH: FA XI v ICS XI. EUROPEAN CUP CHAMPIONS' LEAGUE: Group B: Blackburn v Rosenborg BK. Group C: Borussia Dortmund v Rangers.

SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier Division: Dundee United v Dundee. First Division: Dundee United v Dundee. Second Division: Dundee United v Dundee.

Olympic Games

Atlanta 26 up on Barcelona

ARECORD 195 nations have confirmed they will compete at the Olympics in Atlanta next summer, surpassing the previous high of 169 at the 1992 Games in Barcelona.

North Korea and Afghanistan were the only countries not to reply to the International Olympic Committee's formal invitations by the November 15 deadline.

Afghanistan did not compete at Barcelona due to the long-running civil war and the country remains torn by internal strife. North Korea sent a team in 1992 after boycotting for political reasons the 1988 Games in Seoul and the 1994 Los Angeles Olympics, but it has gone deeper into isolation since the death last year of its long-time leader Kim Il Sung.

The IOC executive meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Japan, also announced that it viewed as "too severe" the International Swimming Federation's recent decision to double the suspension for first-time steroid positives to four years.

"We must give penalties but they must not be so severe for an athlete to be virtually banned from taking part in future events," said the IOC board member Dick Pound. "This is a question of somebody becoming more Catholic than the Pope."

Ice Hockey

Moria is ready to face Danes

STEVE MORIA, Cardiff's Canadian-born forward, is one of nine new names in a 34-man squad announced yesterday by the Great Britain coach Peter Woods for next Wednesday's match against Denmark at Milton Keynes.

Moria has received his British passport since Britain beat the Netherlands 4-1 in their first Olympic qualifying tournament game in October. Woods believes Moria's experience will be crucial in the attempt to reach the 1998 Winter Games in Nagano.

"It's imperative we get a result against Denmark on our home ice because after that we have three games on the road, going to Switzerland, Slovenia and then Denmark," said Woods. The Danes have already beaten Slovenia 4-2.

SQUAD: Netelindere Lyle (Cardiff), Foster (Durham), O'Connor (Nottingham), West (Bathurst), Deacon (Nottingham), Hogg (Sheff Wed), Deacon (Nottingham), Hogg (Sheff Wed), Deacon (Nottingham), Hogg (Sheff Wed).

SWEDISH LEAGUE: Malmö Redhawks v IFK Göteborg. First Division: IFK Göteborg v IFK Göteborg. Second Division: IFK Göteborg v IFK Göteborg.

RUSSIAN LEAGUE: CSKA Moscow v SKA Rostov. First Division: CSKA Moscow v SKA Rostov. Second Division: CSKA Moscow v SKA Rostov.

Sport and Education

Athletes cast doubt on Major's academy plan

THE £100 million Academy of Sport, designed to nurture Britain's elite athletes, came a step closer yesterday when the Sports Council started its two-month consultation with athletes and governing bodies on exactly what the academy should be. The first thing it will find is that elite athletes think the idea is misguided.

The Government's intention to create an academy, modelled largely on the Australian one in Canberra, was announced by John Major in the back garden of 10 Downing Street in July. The Government wants a high-profile, centralised academy where the best of the best in all sports are best-housed to greatness, Major's pre-election sporting legacy to the nation.

But yesterday two top athletes rejected the plan in that form. "If their model is Australia," said Greg Searle, an Olympic gold medalist in rowing in 1992, "then they will be 15 years out of date by the time it is built, because that was set up in 1983."

Top athletes would prefer a strengthening of the regional network of specialist centres such as Lilleshall (gymnastics), youth football, cricket,

Sport and Education

Athletes cast doubt on Major's academy plan

archery; Crystal Palace (boxing, swimming); Bisham Abbey (weightlifting, tennis, hockey); Plas y Brenin (mountaineering) and Holme Pierrepont (water sports).

"We accept that there is a shortfall in facilities," said Gavin Stewart, the chairman of the athletes' commission of the British Olympic Association, "but we don't think that the answer is a big centre where everyone goes on scholarships."

"The view is backed by the 1993 survey of Olympic competitors conducted by the athletes' commission which showed support for national centres for different sports in a variety of regions, with an administrative 'hub'. This is the approach the Sports Council privately endorses, which should make the two-month consultation process to the January 31 deadline most interesting.

"The Australians started with a central hub and have since realised they need a network of regional centres," said Derek Casey, the Sports Council chief executive. "We have the regional centres but need to build the hub."

Candidates for the academy include Sheffield, Nottingham, Loughborough, the University of Sussex, Nottingham and Bath/Bristol.

Teamtalk

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Cricket

Nobody mention dirt in pockets

Mike Atherton was in the doghouse 18 months ago. Mike Selvey on a favour returned

FUNNY how the wheel of fortune turns. Only 18 months ago, in the wake of the dirt-in-the-pocket episode against South Africa, Raynon Illingworth went out of his way to let the world know just how much Mike Atherton owed him. "I saved his neck," he said at the time. "And Mike knows it." Well, he can call it quits now. In batting out the final five sessions to save a Test that was dead and buried, Atherton has returned the favour with knobs on.

Only Illingworth himself knows quite how much credit he has as sole selector and thus strategist, stood to lose had England lost the second Test at The Wanderers and once again been condemned to chasing the opposition rather than dictating the terms.

"He got me out of jail," Illingworth admitted. For a man as adept at deflecting criticism as sowing up plaudits, that is quite something to say. Maybe the truth is that the chairman was trying too hard to be shrewd when he made his pre-match recon of the pitch in Johannesburg, to spot something no one else had noticed when there was nothing there to see.

So he felt dampness to a degree that failed to materialise, and sappy "live" grass where only a matting of parched brown stuff covered the Test strip. So he flew in the face of all impartial advice and selected a battery of pace bowlers, which compelled Atherton to bowl first when he won the toss.

Atherton probably suspected the strategy was wrong even as he implemented it. And after four days, in which England had been outplayed compre-

hensively, he knew for sure and so did his team. Not just a match but perhaps a series was being lost. "I felt I owed them after winning the toss and shoving South Africa in," Atherton said after he had unbuckled his pads on Monday evening. No captain has ever been truer to his obligation, and it must have been as uplifting to his team's morale as it was depressing to South Africa's.

Hansie Cronje's team should clearly have won. With a last-day pitch still of some pace and reduced to a crazy paving of moving platelets separated by cracks large enough for one journalist to drop his Biro down, the South Africans had the conditions side out in five sessions.

Had they held some catches they probably would have run through England. Instead they came out of a second successive Test on the receiving end, and that may do self-belief serious harm. It will take a huge effort on the part of Bob Woolmer and Team South Africa — that posse of experts in any field you care to mention in connection with cricket — to restore spirits before the third Test starts in Durban a week tomorrow. South Africa may have missed the bus.

England, though, also have cause for concern. The monumental effort by Atherton and Jack Russell — who even now is probably sketching out a rough draft for a painting of their partnership, with as much gusto as he has been seeking out the Boer War battlefields — has bought England time and heart. But it cannot mask the shoddy cricket they played.

Yes, England should have batted first, but they should also have made a better fist of bowling than they did. Instead, with the memorable exception of Dominic Cork, who has already matured into one of the Test world's best strike bowlers, they shone like a five-won nightlight.

Significantly 15 of the 19 wickets taken went to Cork and Devon Malcolm — who justified an inclusion that might not have come had England played only three seamers — and both had played in the previous first-class game in Bloemfontein. By contrast the other two seamers had not, and it showed. Angus Fraser failed to get going until the second innings, when he hit the bat harder and looked more dangerous for it. Gough, apart from one spell on Saturday when he hurried Brian McMillan, generally looked innocuous. Either or both should have played before the Test and neither is guaranteed a place in Durban.

The batting too looks ready for a reshuffle, with the writing on the wall for Mark Ramprakash. Had it not been seen a hundred times before in Test cricket, the continuing failure of such a talented batsman to deliver at international level would be staggering. But Illingworth shoved him in at the deep end finally, and regrettably he sank.

"Fifty per cent head," says Illingworth of what makes a Test batsman, "fifty per cent heart, and bugger technique." Ramprakash, alas, may have lots of time to ponder that.

■ "Rubber man" Paul Adams, the left-arm wrist-spinner with the backwards-looking action who took nine England wickets at Kimberley last month, has been named in South Africa's provisional 20-man squad for next year's World Cup.



England's dynamic duo... pondering who will get whom out of trouble next FRANK BAPTON

Sri Lanka's master spinner faces ultimate 'chucker' test

David Hopps in Sydney on Muttiah Muralidaran's likely trial by video

SRI LANKA's controversial off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran must try to ride out a "throwing" storm against Australia in the Test in Perth this week while the man who first alerted the ICC to disquiet about his action is sitting in judgment as the match referee.

Graham Dowling was the New Zealand board's chief executive who sanctioned the forwarding of video evidence which was said to show that Muralidaran's action was illegal after his five wickets had bowled Sri Lanka to victory in Napier in March.

That video was sent to the ICC, and then confidentially passed on to the Sri Lankan authorities with a request that Muralidaran's action — an unusual back-of-the-hand delivery with cocked wrist and bent arm — be "tidied up".

Ominously, nine months later, Dowling assumes command of Australia's three-Test series against Sri Lanka with Muralidaran's action again under severe scrutiny. At least one Australian umpire, Tony McQuillan, expressed official doubts in his report after the tourists' opening match in Mackay against Queensland.

For three years Muralidaran, 23, the only Tamil in the Sri Lanka side, has attracted equal amounts of praise and notoriety. Since his debut against Australia three years ago his 78 victims have made him Sri Lanka's leading Test wicket-taker, but his career has now reached a critical stage. Sri Lanka remain convinced of his legality.

Although the onus remains with the umpires to no-ball a player for throwing, Dowling's advice could become crucial. It would be a coura-

geous, or foolhardy, umpire who took such punitive action in international cricket these days without evidence with the appointed match referee.

David Richards, the ICC's chief executive, said yesterday: "If the umpires express their doubts to the match referee, then the referee has the opportunity to make video evidence available. They can then study the film together and maybe clear up some doubts in their mind. This can be done quietly and without too much fuss."

"Considering whether a player throws or not may only come down to an uneasy feeling about one or two balls in a day's play. It is not always clear-cut."

"This procedure was followed with regard to Muralidaran in Napier earlier this year. In the end, though, the onus is on the umpires."

In fact it was only Dowling's intervention, under strong pressure from New Zealand's captain Ken Rutherford and team manager John Reid, which forced the ICC to become involved. The Kiwis' attempts to lodge a protest with the match referee in Napier, Barry Jarman, had failed when Jarman ruled that he had no power to act because he had received no official representations from the umpires.

The Pakistani umpire Khizar Hayat is the neutral umpire who will officiate in Perth. Dickie Bird, who stood in the last two Pakistan Tests here, must be relieved that he is off back to Barnsley.

The umpires' reports over Muralidaran's action after the Queensland match are seen as outside the ICC's jurisdiction because no match referee was in attendance. As such, McQuillan's reservations will be considered by the Australian board's umpiring manager, Tony Crafter.

His comments are unlikely to cause anything other than smoke — but then how adept will Dowling be at reading the signals?

Rugby Union

England are ready for Dawson to deliver

Robert Armstrong on three possible team changes by Jack Rowell tonight

THE compelling form of Matt Dawson, Lawrence Dallaglio and Graham Rowntree at club and representative level seems likely to win places for all three in the England team to be announced tonight for next week's international against Western Samoa.

The Samoans' second visit to Twickenham — they beat London Division there last week — offers the manager Jack Rowell his last chance to experiment before England's Five Nations Championship opener against France in Paris on January 20.

Dawson may have clinched his first cap last Saturday when Rowell saw the Northampton scrum-half inspire the Midlands to a crushing victory over the Samoans at Leicester. An experienced A international, Dawson showed the willingness to use a wide range of options that was conspicuously missing from Kyran Bracken's performance against South Africa in the world champions' recent win at Twickenham.

To be fair, Bracken is only one of half a dozen players who would have no grounds for complaint if they were dropped after their poor showing against the Springboks. The Bath forwards Victor Uboogu and Andy Robinson are likely to be replaced respectively by Rowntree, the holder of three caps, and Dallaglio, who made his international debut as a replacement in the South Africa game. Uboogu's place has been on the line since the opening games of last summer's World Cup.

England's entire back division, with the honourable exception of Damian Hopley on the wing, will be on probation when they face the hard-hitting Samoans. Their collective failure to maintain crisp, accurate handling in the face of fierce Springbok tackling has cast serious doubt on England's capacity to develop an expansive 15-man game. No player will be called upon to justify himself under pressure more than Mike Catt, whose kicking and option-taking need a 50 per

cent improvement at least. Rowell prefers to talk about "collective responsibility" after three successive defeats — England's worst sequence since 1987-88 — but another Twickenham failure on Saturday week will inevitably raise questions about his future role. Like many managers/coaches who have forged a reputation with a highly successful club, Rowell is finding it difficult to translate his vision of the game into an effective national unit.

For all its shortcomings the Divisional Championship has provided a showcase for a number of excellent players — forwards such as Hill, Phillips and Diprose, backs such as Adebayo, Stimpson and Kinyer. Yet the conservative tactics the clubs employ in league and cup competitions do not prepare their players for the ambitious, all-purpose style Rowell wants to implement. No amount of training sessions at Marlow can transmute domestic dross into international gold.

Rowell will choose his side from an elite squad of 30, having added nine players to the 21 picked for the Springboks game, but there is no guarantee that some of the brightest

talents have not slipped through the net. The North flanker Neil Aspinall and the wing Jim Mallinder have been widely regarded as the top performers in their positions in divisional games, yet neither will even make up the numbers at Marlow.

With good reason the North are also angry at the way the England A selectors have overlooked players who out-classed divisional opponents who subsequently found favour. As the North team secretary Stan Bagshaw pointed out: "We have won both our games in the championship and some of our players have put in tremendous displays yet we only have two men, Stimpson and Kinyer, in the A team. We completely outplayed the South-West, yet we have two men involved and they have six. I am very disappointed for our players."

Inferior physical conditioning is another aspect of England's performance that Rowell must address sooner rather than later. At least half the England team were no match for the Springboks in terms of driving power and ability to put a man down with a powerful tackle.

The Samoans' recent defeats by Cambridge University and the Midlands may suggest they are second-rank opposition. However, when their captain Pat Lam was asked what England could expect at Twickenham, he was

not joking when he replied with a monosyllable: "Pain." ■ The France flanker Philippe Benetton is out of the Five Nations Championship after breaking his right arm for the second time in six months.

Four charged after Nagpur tragedy

FOUR people have been arrested on charges of negligence and causing nine deaths after a stadium wall collapsed during last month's one-day match between India and New Zealand in Nagpur. The four, remanded by a Nagpur court on bail of 2,000 rupees (£37) each, include the stadium architect Anand Godse and contractor Srinivas Vernekar and two cricket officials.

land in Nagpur. The four, remanded by a Nagpur court on bail of 2,000 rupees (£37) each, include the stadium architect Anand Godse and contractor Srinivas Vernekar and two cricket officials.

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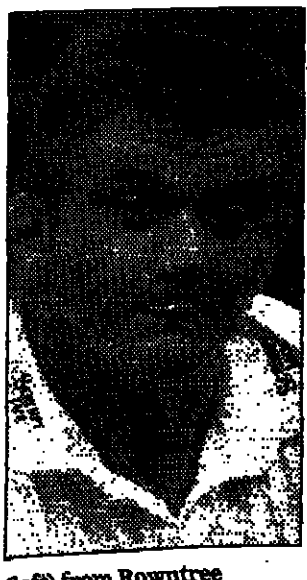
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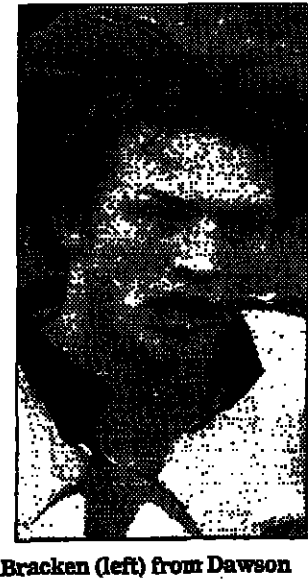
Source: December BARB plus Republic of Ireland



Forward in danger... Uboogu (left) from Rowntree



Scrum-half under threat... Bracken (left) from Dawson



Heineken European Cup: Swansea 22, Castres 10

Williams the boot makes sure it is All Whites on the night

Martyn Williams

SWANSEA reached the semi-final of this inaugural competition after a tempestuous match which saw the Castres replacement forward Guy Jernard sent off for punching.

The All Whites had to work hard to do so, since after building up a 22-7 lead and needing a winning margin of six points to qualify, they had to endure continuous charges on their line to survive the final 10 minutes.

After Jernard's dismissal Castres produced their best period of sustained attacking. Only desperate tackling and fine line-kicking by the Swansea half-backs kept them out.

Swansea owed the win to early domination and their kicker Aled Williams, who had mixed fortune with his normally dependable boots but contributed 12 vital points.

Castres' aggression, indiscipline and failure to cope with Swansea's pace and flair saw them concede three early penalties, all kicked by Aled Williams.

Swansea now added an expansive touch as Alan Harris scored a try from a rehearsed three-quarter move.

Castres were forced to wait for a Swansea mistake and patience was rewarded when the wing Jean-Marc Aue made the most of an elementary drop-out error by Alan Flowers.

Once Castres began to understand the referee's interpretation and acclimatised to the cold, the 6,000 crowd at St. Helens' knew they would not surrender easily. Omi-

nously Castres' back row were beginning to create and show their ability on the counter-attack.

But Castres tended to lose concentration at vital moments, and from a line-out Garin Jenkins took the French cover by surprise to score a try before half-time.

Swansea: A Flowers, S Davies, M Taylor, D Weatherley, A Harris, A Williams, R Jones, K Connelough, G Jenkins, C Anthony, A Moore, S Moore, A Reynolds, R Appleby, S Davies (capt).

Castres: G Davy, J M Aue, A Hyardet, N Combes, P Garrigue, F Pul, F Seguler (capt), S Bristow, G Urios, T Latorpe, T Bouillet, J P Gourrasson, G Pages, N Hollinger, A Ciganga.

Referee: C Muir (Scotland)

Becker's heroics keep Munich buzzing, page 13

Jack Rowell's triple dilemma, page 15

Venables settles on the old firm, page 14

Illingworth begins the post mortem, page 15

SportsGuardian

CROSSLEY HEROICS HELP CLARK'S MEN KEEP EUROPEAN HOPES ALIVE

Uefa Cup, third round second leg: Lyon 0, Nottingham Forest 0 (agg: 0-1)

Forest survive siege of Lyon

Martin Thorpe in Lyon

FOREST's progress through Europe has been a route march more than an odyssey, but another stoic performance on a cold Lyon evening took them into the warming embrace of the Uefa Cup quarter-finals last night. Once again Forest's defence refused to buckle under the weight of attack after attack and another clean sheet was enough to see the team through.

The 1,000 or so Forest fans who made the journey over to strike-bound France, had been herded into a corner behind one goal with their Union flags draped traditionally over the perimeter fence as they anticipated another tense evening going down to the wire.

They arrived to find a surprise in the Forest line-up: Howe thrown in at the deep end for this most important of games. Though 23 years old, the Geordie was making only his fourth first-team start of a modest career that has been held back by what his manager calls "attitude problems".

With Roy injured, Forest needed someone to play up front with Lee and the favourite had been McGregor, scorer of the goal that beat Lyon at the City Ground.

But the nod went to Howe, real name Stephen but known as Bobby for longer than any one can remember. In fact it was nearly Howe who scored in the first leg, but his goal-bound shot was blocked by a Lyon hand. Howe had to be content with winning the penalty that McGregor tucked away from the goalkeeper's parry.

Having been denied that heroic moment, another passed him by after just five minutes last night when he snapped at a shot from a dangerous position on the edge of the Lyon area and watched, head in hands, as the ball skidded just wide of the French post.

It was so nearly the early goal Forest were hoping to force by playing two up. Instead of Lee alone and five in midfield. Had it gone in, Lyon would have needed three goals to win the tie.

But it turned into a small crumb of comfort in a first half which Lyon went on to dominate as Forest found themselves in the familiar position of the oppressed rather than the oppressor.

Struggling in the French



Stone alone... Nottingham Forest's midfielder steals a march on Christophe Devaux last night

PHOTOGRAPH: ANDY HEADING

first division, Lyon are renowned for blowing hot or cold, for example, losing league games against modest domestic opposition but beating Lazio in the last round of this competition.

Maurice, Lyon's top league scorer with eight goals, was Forest's main tormentor before the break. Crossley needed two attempts to hold on to the Frenchman's turn

and shot in the area, Chertie got his body in the way of his eight-yard drive and then Maurice headed just wide from another worryingly dangerous position.

Four minutes before the break Maurice was at it again, Crossley pushing his 20-yard free-kick round the post, then seconds later making an instinctive parry from Bardson's six-yard flick

towards goal. Life in Forest's area, as it so often has been on this European adventure, was getting desperate.

The second half brought no respite for Forest's over-worked back line. Bardson heading wide and yet another shot from Maurice, who had infiltrated to the six-yard line, blocked by a combination of Chertie and Woan.

But then Cooper, such a cool presence amid Lyon's attacking fireworks, did a silly thing. He failed to stop a ball going for a throw and in frustration kicked the ball high into the stand. The result was

a booking to add to the one he picked up in the first leg and an enforced absence from Forest's next European tie.

But things were getting crazier in the Cooper's penalty area as Lyon mounted a bombardment reminiscent of the one Forest received in Auxerre in the last round.

Giuly shot just over from 20 yards and after a familiar pin-ball machine scramble in the area the Frenchman's eighth-yard shot seemed bound to pass Crossley by but instead found the midriff of Chertie's unflinching frame.

On 72 minutes Clark

brought on Haaland for Gemmill in an attempt to bring fresh strength to Forest's overrun midfield. It had little immediate effect. Almost immediately Lyon worked the ball into Giuly about eight yards out and Crossley once more had to be at his best to push the shot away and then

thankfully watch as Bardson, following up, slammed the parry into the side-netting.

Sweat beaded his brow. He gazed heavenwards. "Forgive me Lord for doubting thee, thou hast given me a sign."

No no he hasn't, Greg. Hugo is an idiot - and let go my arm."

England's redeemer liveth



Vincent Hanna

FOUR tries, a salvation, and a funeral. Let us speak of Blessed Michael of Didsbury, and how he ruined the reputation of a saintly man.

I have had two ecstatic experiences. One lasted 643 minutes, the other only seven seconds - yes, I heard that, there is no need to be coarse, I was referring to Martin O'Flaherty's fourth try against the London Broncos, the one where he dribbled the ball soccer-style the length of the field.

Anyway on Monday I was booked for a funeral. Booked, that is, to drive Greg the vicar. We are working on a small project; he suggested I come along as he'd heard they did a nice tea.

He was miserable when I picked him up. "A hundred and sixty-seven for four over-night, what a shambles," he moaned. "Good day for a funeral," I replied helpfully.

"What's your text?" "I saw Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd. God I'm depressed," he said.

He had even checked out Hyman 167. It fitted the mood. Frail children of dust and feeble as frail, in thee do we trust nor find thee to fail. "That's the point," he wailed, "I don't really know if in Him I do trust any more. Middle-order batting collapses are wreaking havoc with my faith."

The journey over the downs progressed in ghastly silence. He forbade the radio. Then the car phone rang and things got noisy. "Vince," trilled a familiar voice. "It's 256 for five at lunch."

"HUGO," I said, "this is not a good time for daff statistics." "Atherton has batted for 417 minutes," he shouted, "and that just happens to be the total of the match-saving partnership between May and Cowdrey at Edgbaston in 1967...hello...hello."

I hung up and apologised to Hugo, who you will remember is an actuary with nothing better to do. Greg wasn't listening. Sweat beaded his brow. He gazed heavenwards. "Forgive me Lord for doubting thee, thou hast given me a sign."

No no he hasn't, Greg. Hugo is an idiot - and let go my arm."

He scabbled in his Bible. "Ere he is, yes, Daniel 12, and as the time shall Michael stand up...and thy people shall be delivered...many shall run to and fro. Oh thank you Lord!"

The service at the crematorium was conducted with dignity and taste. After Hymn 167 Greg told us not to be sad because God was positioned in splendour. "For our team," he intoned. "God will always be patted up and waiting to bat. Our friend George has gone to the great pavilion in the sky."

He sounded almost Boycott-like. "Who's George?" asked the woman beside me. "I thought we were cremating Mabel," I slipped out to use the phrase from the hymn.

"This will interest you," I told the astonished Hugo. "Mike is 159 at tea, and do you know that the 159 is the only bus that goes past both Lord's and The Oval."

"No it doesn't, they cancelled it," he snarled. "You've been talking to that strumpet Ursula Harland."

I confessed that I had consulted her. "How could you?" he wailed. "Now I won't tell you how Ijaz Ahmed forecast the majority in the next General Election." And he hung up.

GREG got through the rest of the ceremony and stood among the bewildered mourners impatiently murmuring words of comfort. Another clergyman turned up and Greg quickly discovered (a) that Atherton had been batting for 10 hours (b) the furnace minder had Sky TV and (c) he had been officiating at the wrong cremation.

Even as we spoke his own customers were filing into the Chapel of Rest.

With a quick "cover for me will you old boy" he ran to the television set where the final 40 minutes unfolded. The Blessed Ursula (virgin, martyr and cougar) phoned to point out that Mike's two innings had lasted 654 minutes - just what England had scored in the fourth innings at Durban in 1939.

Greg was beside himself - his favourite position during Test matches. Faith restored, he crafted new sermons and anthems. As the hours reached the pavilion at 5.37, Greg sang Hymn 521 *thou wast their rock their fortress and their might, thou Mike their captain in the well-fought fight.*

"You know, Greg," I said as I dropped him off, "when all's said and done, you've only managed a draw." He glared and went off muttering.

I couldn't help noticing the plague of locusts in the garden this morning.

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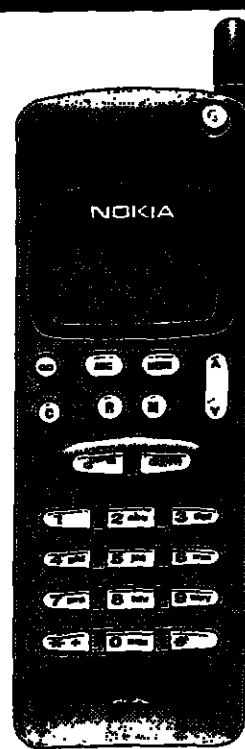
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Venables wants South African tour

Russell Thomas

ENGLAND's footballers may follow in the footsteps of the FA to examine the chances of playing two games against South Africa in late May as the final competitive preparation before England host the summer jamboree.

The FA's commercial director Trevor Phillips is believed to be exploring the possibility of England playing in Johannesburg and the gambling resort of Sun City.

The trip would break new ground. England have never played the South Africans in a senior soccer international and the last

official visit was by an FA XI in 1966.

One advantage of the South African trip is that it would provide a welcome change of scene, and England's players would not have a major time-zone change to trouble them.

"I'm hoping to get two games away before the tournament," Venables confirmed yesterday. He also wants his squad to have an entirely football-free break between the FA Cup final on May 11 and the overseas trip.

"We will get together to begin training," he said, "have the two games and then come back to finish off our preparations."

Fifa said yesterday that the 1998 World Cup qualifying draw would definitely go ahead in Paris next Tuesday despite the wave of strikes in France.

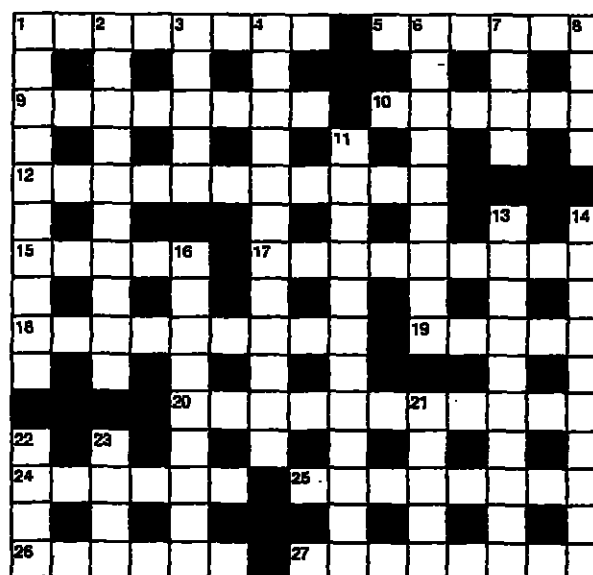
David Lacey, page 14

I speak to her in an alien tongue, strange words from another planet. "Tidy," I say. "Read a book, do homework, go to an exhibition." Treasure looks blank. She has entered another sphere.

Treasure G2 page 12

Guardian Crossword No 20,517

Set by Gordius

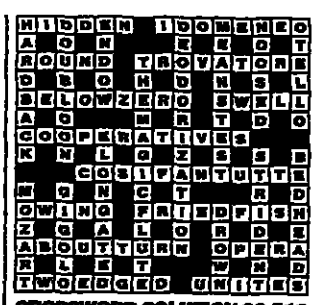


Across

- 1 Near to rejecting agreement, but sleep on it (8)
- 2 No gentleman takes one in with his word (6)
- 3 Surprise, so one hasn't to be staggered (8)
- 4 Holy Communion vestment sent back including direction for whitening (5)
- 5 'Co' meant 'firm' - that's a reasonable statement (4,7)
- 6 Joint secured by soldier (5)
- 7 Lack of confidence for student to be in debt - there's a lesson in that (3,5)
- 8 What's needed to get round our planet? (5,4)
- 9 Direction to eliminate art (5)
- 10 Against having a youngster in time of cohabitation (11)
- 11 He wrote about a bunny (6)

Down

- 1 How many cattle are in good shape? (4,6)
- 2 Prisoner's dream and cricketeer's nightmare (7,3)
- 3 Doctor's note (5)
- 4 Billy seems an odd contributor to industrial output (8,4)
- 5 Almost qualified to cajole us into washing (9)
- 6 Stonewall done by an apprentice (4)
- 7 Part of the chorus is repeated (4)



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,516

- 11 Gerry new slum development does little for the environment (5,6)
- 12 Does South Africa have it in the country? Unlikely (1,1)
- 14 What's on at the Royal Court? (4,6)
- 16 Worker digging a hole might be forthright (3)
- 21 No sensible person stood up to Amin (5)
- 22 No doubt he was brought up inside Boaz's house (4)
- 23 Cain's unlikely victim? (4)

Solution tomorrow

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